ORBIT

OCTOBER 1990, VOLUME 21, NUMBER 3

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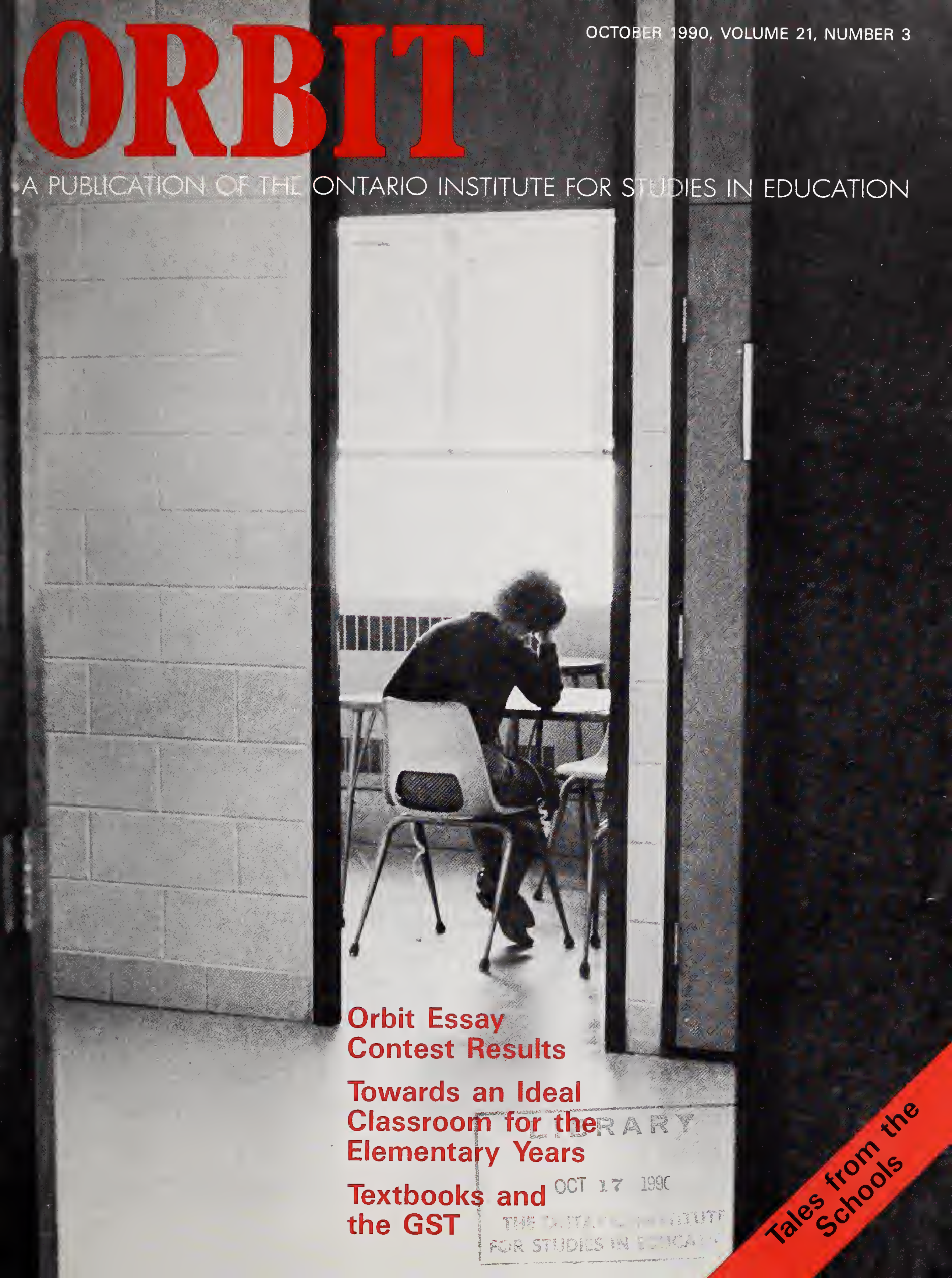

Orbit Essay Contest Results

Towards an Ideal Classroom for the Elementary Years

Textbooks and the GST

Tales from the Schools

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CONTENT

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How Can We Improve Ontario Schools?

Asheesh Advani

First Year Student, Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania

John Locke declared that the four aims of education were virtue, wisdom, breeding, and learning. He published his *Letters Concerning Toleration* in 1690, in which he wrote that the result of reaching these four educational goals was to achieve greater "toleration." The absence of human tolerance, according to Locke, was the cause of conflict. Today, exactly 300 years later, not much has changed.

Several months ago, on New Year's Eve, a group of youths from a high school in a well-to-do Toronto neighbourhood approached an Asian youth from another high school and beat him to death.

A lack of tolerance is most often the cause of conflicts such as the one above. In the form of sexual intolerance and racial intolerance, attitudes of youth in this province have resulted in the formation of street gangs and violent school cliques. Locke was correct in making the connection between education in schools and the need for increased tolerance. Virtue, wisdom, breeding, and learning may be the short-term goals of the North American educational philosophy, but what does this education mean if students continue to discriminate, slander, rape, and abuse others? What does education mean if one in fifteen youths admit to having attempted or committed rape? What can we do in schools to change the situation?

Chris Ward, the former Ontario Minister of Education, did not answer any of these questions. Instead, he taught us what not to do. Last year, the Ontario Court of Appeal decided to strike down a law which had required all public schools in the province to incorporate the Christian Lord's Prayer as part of their morning exercises. Chris Ward was given a golden opportunity. As Minister of Education, he was in the position of recommending an alternative exercise to the Lord's Prayer. He did. In an announcement to the people of Ontario, Mr. Ward recommended that educators in Ontario include "a minute of silence" in the morning announcements, or simply eliminate prayers altogether. No more complaints from irate parents claiming that their children are being indoctrinated. Peace at last for Mr. Ward.

Or so he thinks. Imagine a classroom full of screaming, jumping, hair-pulling Grade 1's asked to remain completely still for 60 seconds of silence at nine o'clock in the morning — and instructed to think about God, the difference between right and wrong, and the societal injustices of sexual and racial discrimination. No teacher would want to assume responsibility for such a class. Perhaps, Mr. Ward, however, would like to try supervising one morning!

First-place winner Asheesh Advani with OISE Director Walter Pitman.

The intent of last year's court ruling to strike down the Lord's Prayer legislation was to encourage multiculturalism and tolerance for other cultures. The intent is honourable. But the consequences are unfortunate. How can we ensure that the consequences of the ruling correspond to its honourable intent?

The answer is not a minute of silence, nor an all-out ban on school prayers altogether. Rather, students should be permitted to use the valuable minutes in the morning exercises to give the rest of the school a brief idea of the practices of their own culture. Whether the student offers a brief explanation of a cultural celebration or a didactic story to the school, the result will be the same: students will no longer be ashamed of their cultures.

Each senior student who delivers the morning thought will learn about what he or she is going to say, and deliver it to the other students with pride. Students will listen to their peers and, in doing so, be exposed to ideas and beliefs from countries around the world. They will develop valuable communication skills both while delivering their prayer and listening to their friends' prayers. But, most of all, they will develop a greater tolerance and appreciation for the beliefs of others.

It is unfortunate that John Locke is not available to meet Mr. Ward and explain that education is more than just Ministry curricula and "required reading lists." Perhaps, Mr. Ward should be given a taste of his own medicine: a "required reading list" of his own with Locke's *Letters of Toleration* and this essay as the first two entries.

Asheesh Advani, Deputy School Captain at UTS, 1989/90, has written a book, **With Pardonable Pride: The University of Toronto Schools** *to be released in Jan./91 by Addwin Publications. $25.00. All proceeds to charity. Call (416) 470-9857.*

HOW CAN SCHOOLING BE IMPROVED

ESSAY COMPETITION

Richard G. Townsend

Professor, Department of Educational Administration

- "We [high school seniors in Ontario] are expected to protect the delicate image of our school, excel in all subjects, and create a friendly and welcome atmosphere for all to share. In my opinion, that is pathetic. We have a hard enough time dealing with everything else in our lives and our education system should not be allowed to add further pressures."
- "Restrictions forbid students to be present near the front entrance of the school because that is where the visitors arrive. This restriction portrays, to students, the negative idea that they make bad impressions on visitors."
- "Too many students are in one classroom, learning time is taken away from each other. . . . In many classes, I ask for help and the teachers say they will when they are finished helping other students and then they forget . . . leaving you to figure it out on your own. Then when a test comes and you fail it, teachers comment, 'You should have come to me for help'."
- "Often it's the sports department that gets the new money. The music department has 20-year-old broken instruments . . . [and] many courses cannot be thoroughly taught due to a lack of current texts, but at least the football team looks good."

When we sent out a "Call for Papers" last year to over 500 high schools asking 17- and 18-year-old Ontarians to write a 750-word essay on the question, "How can Ontario education be improved?", we anticipated views as revealing as those excerpted above. After all, we asked students to draw on personal experiences and to cast a cold light on the systems that they were passing through. The 109 entries, from all parts of the province, turned out to be even more lively than anticipated. Irony was frequent. And, by and large, the essayists answered the larger question, "Do Ontario schools need improving?" with a resounding yes.

Clearly we cannot claim a representative sample of the Class of '90, and we suspect that some of these young writers overstate and misunderstand. Yet their voices are worth hearing for their own sakes. What's more, they also may speak for more than themselves.

Typical were general put-downs such as "Our education system is heading West in an attempt to get to the North Pole" and "Do we really expect a system built for the late 1800s to be able to properly educate . . . for our present society?". A sense of gloom pervaded several essays too, as when one senior decided that "As long as young people are required to go to school, they will always be miserable." But not all were vague or inclined towards despair.

Quoting or paraphrasing their specificities and hopes, we report initially on the theme of this overview's very first quote — about how schools should relax their internal pressures on teen-agers. Later, we synopsize concerns about physical space, teaching, and curricular priorities, symbolized by our three other quotes above.

Regarding pressures, essayists argue in a variety of phrasings that either one keeps pace with the group or one gets left behind. "Because of the emphasis placed on academic involvement, fun-loving school spirit is put on a shelf," winning is seen as imperative, and the joy of extra-curricular activities is thought to be downplayed. Different age groups do not interact, a couple of pupils complained, and "a clique environment" is a drag.

Students also perceive themselves as "belittled" by steady surveillance "for smoking in the washroom, eating in the hall, kissing one's girlfriend, wandering with no specific destination, painting the sky purple, spouting too many socialist theories." Besides, as one girl writes, "The student body turns into zombies, mesmerized by the bonging of the bell. Bong — be seated for the first class, bong — stand and walk to your locker, exchange books and head to the next class, bong — find your seat and sit down, class now begins, bong — stand and walk to your locker, exchange books for brown-bag lunch and head to cafeteria in an orderly fashion, bong . . . the process ever so ritual . . . being [so] automated goes against preparing students [for later life]." A boy complains that rather than being treated as an adult, "If you come in just as the bell finished, then you are sent to the office to get a late slip, then you lose .5 percent of your course mark, and lastly they top if off by serving a detention during your lunch hour." If a student is suspended because of vandalism, "the idea of an appeal is quite ludicrous," another student explains, "since the appeal takes place after the punishment."

Second-place winner Paul Bobbit. Bobbit began his critique of the destreaming initiative by suggesting that "turning the school system upside down without complete and extended research is a solution that is doomed from the start."

The work ethic (our words, not theirs) is not a pressure shared by all students, or so varied essayists acknowledge. Indeed, "some of us are guilty of giving our teachers a rough time. We're given homework and we could care less if the work gets done. If we can disrupt a class by being loud, we'll do it. If we can be present for attendance in the morning, then disappear later on, we'll do it." Against that backdrop, punishment works, a Peterboroughian claims. But unlike a detention, "making a student clean a specific room or run official errands for a week is a [more] productive and beneficial form of punishment. It also makes other students visibly aware of the consequences of wrong-doings." A Hamiltonian insists that such punishment changes the "bad" attitudes of those who drop rotten banana peels in halls and put wads of chewing gum on ceilings.

Space Wars

If this makes school sound like a fairly easy place for getting into trouble, an additional impression that emerges from about a fifth of these essays is that the physical setting can be off-putting. Sometimes a sense of relative deprivation is manifest, as in "It really breaks my heart to look at the grave differences right here in my own community." While indicating "there may be no such thing as a perfect" building, a different essayist observes. "One thing that Ontario high schools are not is equitable. At one, the swim team practises in the mud puddles, the auto mechanics course takes place in the parking lot, and one of the teachers on spare is pretending to be a guidance counsellor when all that is on his mind is the new coffee maker in the staff room. Contrarily, at another school the cafeteria is never more than half-full [students have better places to be], students know what courses they will need in the future, and the art facilities are nothing short of magnificent." The air and lighting can be poor, lockers are too small, hallways are narrow, elevators are needed for physically disadvantaged students, resource centres require updating, and row seating is less appreciated than a discussion-enhancing "distribution of pupils in a semi-circle around the room approximately three students in depth." Portables are "the pits, because you can almost hear everything going on in the classroom next door and because on rainy, windy days your papers get all messed up and you get all wet."

To the adult who can go to the bathroom when nature calls, grievances about toilet facilities, and frustrating waits in line there, may seem petty, but they appear in students' accounts. For instance, an essayist writing from a small town says, "School washrooms could use some attention, as their conditions may imply that they are not contained in the school blueprint and, to the administration's knowledge, do not even exist. In such a washroom, one may find a sink or two that still functions, one roll of sandpaper (a.k.a. toilet paper), and perhaps even a mirror."

Welcoming arrangements for learning sometimes are lacking. According to one, "the lack of comfortable seating areas (aside from those in libraries) forces students to spend any spare time they may have wandering aimlessly around the halls," disrupting classes that are in progress. One writer offers a corrective: "Imagine a classroom with a shag carpet, plush floor cushions, plants or pets or something living, and a fireplace . . . comfortable, perhaps a little extreme, but nevertheless the proper learning environment is there."

Blame for impersonal and "robotic" conditions is attributed to boards ("usually low-skilled politicians who couldn't make it onto city council"), principals (who are seen as becoming "uninspired" in their jobs), guidance counsellors ("It is probable that you may never find a suitable counsellor; it took me five years"), office secretaries ("cranks breathing down your neck"), custodians (who "during lunch period while students are supposed to be enjoying meals" will stack chairs on the cafeteria tables where students are sitting), business (which, in its "ever-tightening grip, tries to push its values into the curriculum"), and the government (which should use TV and radio to promote "the benefits of going to a counsellor so that students won't face any stigma in going").

The Identities of Teachers

Most commentary, however, is saved for those whom the essayists know best, classroom teachers. Several gratefully are saluted for their approachability, enthusiasm, sincerity, and caringness. "They put up with a lot, even when they don't have social workers and helpers in the classroom." One girl "discovered a new, confident, and extremely outspoken self after transferring schools. This was [because of] the teachers' influence. They were real people who lived in the real world, not happy land. They respected me as an individual and encouraged me to be one, instead of conforming."

More often, however, faculty come off badly. They are "uncreative" in their teaching methods, "set in their ways," and rely on "recitation of questions and answers from the book." They "teach to the elite in the class, leaving those having difficulties further and further behind." They award marks that are not "strict enough since a student knows his standing and personal capabilities, and an artificially high grade breaks down the respect between the teacher and student." Soon, "a standard test must be made to evaluate teachers, and this should be the basis for raises." Teachers do not co-ordinate assignments with colleagues, so four essayists are irked at having assignments that all come due at the same time.

Teachers fail, moreover, "to tell students something about themselves, as normal human beings — self-disclosure would make students feel more comfortable learning from them." Some faculty "couldn't express themselves if their lives depended on it" and when they do try to communicate, they may answer the pupil who seeks help in an "embarrassing, loud, and conspicuous voice." Other insensitivity occurs, as when a teacher "became extremely angry that I hadn't planned to go to university to continue with my math ability. He told me I was wasting my time in Advanced or OAC courses if I was just leaving school to work full-time right away. What the teacher didn't realize was that math to me was a hobby more or less like poetry or writing is to other students. Math as a career didn't interest me — but [after the teacher in effect told me that I should be taking Basic Math] I suddenly found myself with a bad attitude towards one of my favourite subjects."

Solutions, which in these essays are presented much less often than problems, include teachers taking weekend courses to keep up to date. Teachers also are advised to make "regular phone calls to parents . . . whether or not the student is doing well." Teachers, it is alleged, should rotate courses and broaden their horizons by transferring to different schools. Finally, teachers ought to better comprehend their ability to "shape the future. Did you [educators] ever stop to think that maybe, just maybe, you are teaching the next Prime Minister of Canada?"

Changing Courses of Study

It is not difficult (our writers note) to see how the curriculum can be bettered. Courses should be self-paced and individualized. Greater attention should be given to reading. Heavier work should be demanded of students taking core French. There's "overmuch Shakespeare." To compete, athletes should meet the academic standard of at least a 60 percent average. Most of the essayists wrote about innovations possible in secondary curricula, but a handful also recalled poor teaching of science, with scant hands-on experience, during their elementary years.

"During my stay in Asia," another essayist reflected on the curriculum, "I realized how much the Ontario school system had failed me [in not exposing me] to any detailed study of the history, geography, politics, or religion of the Far East. . . . After talking with Hong Kong residents, I realize the problems Hong Kong faces as 1997 approaches are very real. After seeing Bangkok and the industry of its people, I know it won't be long before Bangkok is the Hong Kong or Tokyo of tomorrow. To have a guide in China that says she will have 'one party dress for life' and who has not the freedom to even travel the 50 miles by hydrofoil to Hong Kong leaves one with a desperate desire to know more so that when help can be given one is ready. To sit on a plane by a New York businessman, not ten years older than myself, who makes his living travelling all over the Far East selling blue jeans, makes me aware of the business opportunities that are about to unfold in Asia. However, if thanks to a lack of education in Ontario I cannot understand the people, their culture, their politics and hence their way of doing business, how can I be expected to compete and make a success of myself with this new force in Asia?"

Other Ontarians give germane reasons for introducing courses in law, logic, parenting, marketing, Canadian history, sideways thinking, astronomy, psychology, martial arts, co-op education, co-ed gym, time management, the sustainable environment, and life after school (which would teach about balancing cheque books, buying groceries, buying insurance, filling out wills and tax returns, furnishing apartments, following birth control, and doing the Heimlich manoeuvre). An Issues course should be compulsory for Grades 9–11, with students planning parts of its curriculum a year before taking such a class themselves. Executives, one student says, should come into classes with actual problems and solicit the class's help in finding solutions. Another suggestion is that learners pick the outside speakers for their schools' assemblies.

Views were divided about exemptions from exams for those with high grades. One group saw exemptions as desirable in keeping able students from being "pulled down" by bungling an exam, while a second group opposed exemptions ("for university, people need the experience in writing exams"). Similarly, and more importantly, mainstreaming was contested along with the present "washed-out version of the streaming concept." Proponents maintained that the integration of diverse students discouraged labelling and reduced gaps between the "so-called intelligent and the so-called non-intelligents." To members of this camp, "Advanced does not mean intelligent and Basic does not mean stupid," and to its credit mainstreaming would reinforce that point. Opponents, though, saw mainstreaming as a way that deterred the young from living up to their potential. Segregated among themselves, lower-stream pupils would avoid the derision that might come from upper-stream students they were working alongside. Additionally, low-stream students would benefit from the expertise of teachers who worked only with that one stream.

Some, especially in private schools, yearn for the old days of provincial exams for graduating seniors. They say that the method of measuring one's learning in Ontario is "so ghastly that it hurts students who are bright." Needed, then, is a common proficiency test, or a basic provincial requirement, or within-school consistency so that everyone is rated for university admissions in an identical way. "This pressure would coerce students to work harder at their academics." Instead, however, "there is always the possibility that, because of a first-year teacher somewhere who felt that inflating her students' marks will help her career, you [a student in a better school or with a tougher teacher in the same school] will be edged out of some post-secondary placement by a person who has an 85 percent average in a class where the average is 82 as opposed to you who may have an 84 percent average when the class average is 65. This is not right."

Reshaping the Enterprise

Some hold that schools should be rescheduled. In the perspective of one essayist who has already decided he wants to go to medical school, coursework ought to be compressed by a year or two. Also keen for recasting the structure of schooling, two geographically dispersed essayists proposed that the fall semester begin three weeks earlier and end at Christmas time, followed by a month-long break, the payoff being that "students would not get depressed in mid-year." A different tack is the proposition that students would concentrate more on their studies if only two classes were taught each semester, in an academic year with four semesters rather than two. One boy, conceiving of present secondaries as supermarkets, projected schooling as a range of separate shops like the butcher, baker, and vegetable store; every school building would be specialized, enabling a student either to pursue a trade, the arts, business, languages, or science.

If one aim of secondary education is to train students to be critical thinkers, Ontario's system certainly would seem to be working, at least with most of the 109 students who chose to enter *Orbit*'s first essay contest. With directness, logical sequence, good expression, as well as interesting and often realistic points, they tell how it is on their front lines of education. And, as one of these essayists might have asked (we would have, when we were their age): Who can tell the doctor where it hurts better than the patient her or himself? Who can tell where Ontario schools need improvement better than students themselves?

The Winners in 1990

For *Orbit*'s first Essay Contest, $555.00 in cash and merchandise (including coupons from the World's Biggest Bookstore) was divided up among six essayists. First-place winner was Asheesh Advani of the University of Toronto Schools. Second-place winner was Paul Bobbit of North Toronto Collegiate. Other winners were Luis DaSilva of South Secondary in London, Hal Dumbrille of Brockville Collegiate in Maitland, and Rob Johnson of St. Mark's High School in Manotick. Judges were Ruth Scott, an English consultant with the Halton Board, Heather Berkeley, *Orbit* Editor, and Richard Townsend.

Dare to Dream

SCHOOLS COULD BE IMPROVED BY SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Rob Johnson

First Year Student, Bishop's University, Quebec

I was sprawled out on the couch, poring over our family albums recently when I stumbled upon a worn, yellowing photograph of my father as a boy. The grainy picture revealed an angelic, blonde child in an English school uniform. The snapshot instantly triggered images of my schoolmates and I began to think. Our Ontario schools are quite good overall, although some may have a few inept teachers and prehistoric policies; they could, however, be improved by the introduction of a school uniform. Not only would this ease some of the pressure in my life, but it would also improve many aspects of the school's social condition.

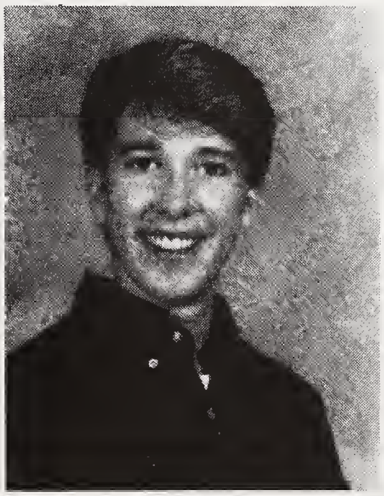
My schoolbus usually picks me up at 8:20 every morning. I get up at 7:30 a.m. The fifty minutes I use to garb myself in some ensemble that isn't totally gauche could easily be chopped in half if I had a uniform. I would stagger — haggard, pale, and in all likelihood, nearly comatose — from my bed, through a hot shower, and into a simple school uniform. I could say goodbye to rifling through my closet seconds before the arrival of my bus in order to find a shirt that wouldn't clash violently with my Chuck Taylor basketball shoes. Once I had learned to knot a tie, I might even have time for a hot breakfast.

I was cut off in mid-thought as the homework I had laboriously ploughed through all morning began to take its toll. My eyelids, weighed down by mental fatigue, finally closed and I fell into a deep, dreamy sleep . . .

After a brief bus ride with other smartly dressed students, I walk into school. In the seniors' hallway, I maintain a three-year personal tradition of antagonizing the rather unpopular and badly dressed Chris Walters by exclaiming, "Nice bell-bottom pants, loser!" Then I stop. Today, he is sporting a school uniform like everyone else. Suddenly, I am struck by a revelation (or is it Chris's fist?). No, it is definitely a revelation! Discrimination and unfair judgment based on a kid's apparel are now nonexistent. The revelation has a profound effect on me as I ponder its ramifications. School uniforms will provide the student with anonymity, and therefore unite a student body severed into sects of skinheads, preppies, head bangers, normals, new wavers, and even proverbial nerds like Chris Walters. Hardly sensing the tiles beneath my freshly buffed Hushpuppie loafers, I walk numbly through a sea of uniforms to my locker.

"Geeez!" I sigh. "I guess this means I have to judge others by personality, not by appearance." Suddenly, the heavens open and rejoicing cherubim sound their golden trumpets . . . or is it Motley Crue's new single reverberating through the hallway from someone's ghettoblaster? I don't know, but I get my books and close my locker.

"School uniforms will unite a student body severed into sects of skinheads, preppies, head bangers, normals, new wavers, and even proverbial nerds."



Rob Johnson

As I pass the school office, I see several disgruntled students involved in animated conversation with the principal. Adamantly opposing the shirt-and-tie policy which they maintain is restrictive, unfair, and contradictory to freedom of expression, these dissenters fail to see the uniform as a benefit to the majority. They hastily decide to transfer to other schools but, fortunately, they aren't friends of mine. Anyway, I'm sure the school's new image will attract new students. I look at my watch and suddenly realize I will be late for English.

Quite disappointed at having passed Chris Walters again without hurling a butterfly-collar-related insult his way, I walk into class. As I take my seat, I peer around the room at the uniformed figures. The luscious but snooty Lotta Cash is no longer able to flaunt her zillion dollar outfits and belittle the other girls. As well, fewer people treat Penny Less as a welfare case. The high school fashion show is finally over. Proper, organized, and more mature, the class earns new respect from the teacher. Both administration and students approve of the uniform which has transformed the school; it now has dignity . . .

I was rudely awakened and robbed of my dream as my feet were shoved off the couch.

"Rob, wake up!" my sister nagged. "And keep your feet off the couch." She was using that Gestapo tone again.

I rubbed my eyes and looked up to see my little sister with armfuls of expensive, exotic, extravagant new clothing. She had been shopping all day, and wore a grin that could have housed several coat hangers and the coat rack they hung from.

"Look at all the new outfits I bought for school!" she cried excitedly.

My reaction was anything but excited. My fingers suddenly felt cramped, and I looked down at my aching right hand. In it was the picture of the uniformed schoolboy.

Towards an Ideal Classroom for the Elementary School Years

Ruth Weir

Trustee, Board of Education for the City of Etobicoke

I have been asked by parents, fellow Trustees, and others to try to put into words what my vision of an elementary school classroom would be like, especially in the very early school years. My vision is based mainly on my own experience and my judgment as to what has worked and what will work generally. It is also based on my central pedagogical conviction that while it is the child who learns, she or he does so only with the aid of a teacher and that the responsibility for seeing that the child actually learns lies with adults, not with the child her or himself.

In our time, and in Ontario especially since the mid-1960s, the responsibility for the success of the child in our schools has been shifted increasingly from that of the teacher to that of the child. This means that children who do not have parents who are capable of teaching them what has not been taught in the schools will find themselves severely disadvantaged. This especially affects some recent immigrant groups and the poor among the native born, especially those in single-parent families or families with social problems.

Some Historical Notes

Before proceeding to sketch my picture of an ideal classroom and to outline the content and teaching methods appropriate to it, I want to offer first a preamble to provide a sense of how we got to our present situation.

Roughly speaking, there are three main currents in educational thought which have left their mark on our presuppositional structure. These currents derive respectively from Plato, from John Locke, and from Rousseau. Each offers an account of educational knowledge, of the aims of education, and of the methods appropriate to education.

Plato, whose main educational thought is to be found in his works *Meno* and *The Republic*, argued that, contrary to the common opinion that knowledge derives from the senses, true knowledge rests in the soul and is timeless and innate. Plato was much impressed by mathematics and this is a pretty plausible account of the nature of mathematical knowledge. But Plato generalized this account to cover all knowledge. Mathematical knowledge does derive from suggestion, discussion, and argument; and passing on such knowledge requires careful sequencing of problems, suggestions, discussions, and arguments before such knowledge can be had by a student.

Plato was also concerned with moral knowledge, which had been the obsession of his teacher, Socrates. And it, too, appears to be a topic best treated by a careful sequencing of problems, suggestions, discussion, and argument. It is also very hard to see how either mathematical or moral knowledge can derive directly from the senses since neither a knowledge of, say, lines and points or of the good appears to be obtained through the eyes, the ears, or the fingers.

Until the 17th century, schooling largely revolved around passing on mathematical knowledge and moral wisdom, especially moral wisdom embodied in ancient languages. So it is not surprising that Plato's picture of education was an important one and of course it contains a great deal of truth. Certainly mathematics, ancient languages, and moral wisdom are only to be acquired by carefully sequenced application to a large body of traditional material. And each successful step in the mastery of such material is rather like discovering yet another piece of knowledge innate in oneself.

However, with the rise of natural science in the 16th and 17th centuries, it became clear that education could not be confined solely to the study of the mathematical or the moral and that the natural world was a topic of great and abiding interest too. John Locke, a contemporary of Isaac Newton and himself a physician, took seriously the pedagogical problems relating to the education of a young person in the dawning age of natural science. And what was obvious to Locke was that our knowledge about the natural world was in some very important manner derived from the fact that we see the world, smell it, touch it, and hear it. And until we have first had some direct sensual relation to something in the world we know nothing about it whatever. In this sense our mind begins empty and is only filled in by our direct, sensual experience. This is the origin of the pedagogical theory, deriving from Locke, that our minds are, with respect to all knowledge, initially blank and that what we learn is connected only with what we have experience of through our senses.

This puts a tremendous burden on the educator, since she or he has not only to determine what is worth impressing on the blank slate of each child, but also what the appropriate sequence of sense impressions must be for optimal learning. This is especially important for moral education, though equally challenging with regard to the experiences leading to a mastery of foreign languages, mathematics, and the natural sciences.

Note that both Plato and Locke require careful, teacher-directed pedagogy and exact sequencing of instruction in order that learning should be optimal and that moral and mental chaos does not result.

The third major figure to influence the presuppositions of our time is Rousseau. Rousseau is an 18th-century figure who has had considerable influence on many important thinkers, both politically and educationally. Neither Plato nor Locke had assumed that young people were either naturally morally good or naturally morally bad. But Rousseau was convinced that it was the nature of the young person to be naturally good and naturally to learn and that it was only the influence of society (including teachers and parents) who corrupted her or him and so produced a badly educated adult, who was neither good nor well-educated.

Although there are still strains of Plato and Locke in our contemporary educational presuppositions and practices, it is Rousseau's view which dominates in our own time. It is important to understand that Rousseau's view is a reaction to the rising influence of science, of rational thought, in his own time and to the view that one could accomplish anything by rational thought. Essentially, he produced a doctrine to the effect that we could neglect rational thought and let nature take its course, especially in the pedagogical sphere.

There is certainly truth to Rousseau's view that it is natural for children to wish to acquire knowledge. But there is no *special* or *definite* knowledge which is natural for any child to acquire, and certainly the acquisition of socially useful or personally useful knowledge is not an innate power of children. Thus it remains for adults to direct, until the child is ready and capable of independent thought and action, the natural urge to learn. Otherwise learning, if it occurs at all, will be merely chaotic and as likely harmful as useful or at best trivial. Similarly, moral development, so far as this involves knowledge, is also just as likely to be stifled or twisted as channelled into personally or socially useful paths.

Progressive education in our time, is a modern version of the doctrines of Rousseau. It appears to have "scientific" support deriving from evolutionary biology, particularly in the 19th-century view of thinkers like Haeckel ("ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny") and Herbert Spencer as well as from psychological testing deriving from the invention of the "intelligence quotient" and the more recent work of Jean Piaget. These theories suggest that certain kinds of learning occur optimally at certain ages or stages and cannot occur at an earlier phase.

In fact, there is no convincing evidence for any of these views, despite their popularity in this century. Spencer's and Haeckel's views that knowledge derived from previous generations was somehow innate in the human being and that therefore a curriculum could be devised which was somehow in tune with the stages of evolution is simply silly, part of the misunderstandings and misapplications of Darwin, of which Lamarck's doctrines are the paradigm. It is significant that the "father of progressive education," G. Stanley Hall, was a student of Haeckel. He took Haeckel's conclusion that the child in the womb passes through all evolutionary stages from the amoeba to the human being and applied it to mental recapitulation as well. Hall's picture of a school was one in which "the Guardians of the young should strive first of all to keep out of nature's way, and to prevent harm, and should merit the proud titles of defenders of the happiness and rights of children." But keeping out of nature's way, when nature is misunderstood, can easily lead to the neglect of children and of their education.

Keeping out of nature's way when nature is misunderstood can easily lead to the neglect of children and of their education.

In the U.S., under the influence of progressive education, the curriculum shifted from an emphasis on the learning of specific knowledge and skills to an emphasis on the individual child with no special emphasis on knowledge and skills. At the same time a number of slogans were formulated which can be recognized as part of today's commonplace educational vocabulary. They include "freedom to develop naturally," "interest the motive for all work," "the teacher as guide, not as task master," and "scientific study of pupil development." Play was stressed, as was the notion that "each individual has uniquely creative potentialities."

All of these slogans derive from 19th-century misunderstandings of evolutionary theory applied to social and educational problems and have been thoroughly discredited in the scientific literature. Yet they form the presuppositional structure of the dominant educational ideas in our time and they continue to do great harm. They do harm because children need help to develop; there is no "natural" development in the sense imagined by Rousseau, by Haeckel, or by G. Stanley Hall. They do harm because they prevent children from being given something definite to be interested in and the skills and knowledge necessary for that interest to develop. They do harm because, while it is true that the teacher must be the guide, the teacher must also be in part a task master, just as a swimming teacher, a piano teacher, a basketball coach, or a ballet mistress must, or no tasks will be accomplished. And they do harm because their emphasis on play neglects the true nature of play, namely the joyful engagement in something for its own sake in which one possesses skills and knowledge enabling one to do it well.

Similarly, I.Q. testing has been thoroughly discredited in serious educational research circles and has come to be seen as special pleading, often for racist reasons, and has even been the source of some of the great scientific scandals of the century. (See, for example, *The Mismeasure of Man*, by Stephen Jay Gould.)

Finally, the pedagogical success in Japan and elsewhere of the methods of Dr. Suzuki, both for musical education and now for everything else in the curriculum, throws great suspicion on Piaget's claims, since Suzuki demonstrates, with overwhelmingly convincing evidence (e.g., thousands of tiny children playing Vivaldi concerti) that it is possible by direct instruction to teach pretty well anything to anybody at any age, given only the correct pedagogical sequences. (See, for example, *Nurtured With Love*.)

Assumptions behind such documents as

Living and Learning and present-day Ontario Ministry of Education documents are based largely on Rousseau's assumptions in contemporary dress. It is taken for granted that there are "unique" learning needs of the individual child and that these are more important than the common knowledge and skills which every child must share with every other in order for easy communication to occur. It is taken for granted that children, if left alone, will develop naturally and learn what they need to know.

But these are questions which are either matters for debate and political decision or matters for careful educational research. Do we really know that there are "unique" learning needs for each and every child? Undoubtedly children are all unique and the effort which a teacher makes will have to be adapted to each individual. But it does not follow that *what* they should all learn, in terms of definite skills and definite knowledge, at least up to high school, should not be exactly the same. The suggestion of Mortimer Adler, the editor of the Encyclopaedia Britannica and one of the authors of *The Paiedea Proposal*, that the "best education for the best is the best education for all" has at least equal plausibility.

Relevance of these Historical Notes to the Present Situation — Ontario

The assumptions inherent in the dominant educational arrangements in Ontario are curious ones. While few would deny that there is human development, both physical and mental, there is a dearth of evidence to indicate that such development takes place "naturally," apart from experience directed by adults or at least by copying the actions of older members of the species. For example, it is physically impossible for a newborn to walk up and down stairs. We teach our one-year-olds to do that. Left to themselves, a one-year-old who wants to walk down stairs like the adult models do will suffer certain disaster. Here one possesses a limited ability but inadequate knowledge. Should a parent allow a child to "discover" walking down stairs with the danger of an attendant broken neck? Or, rather, should a child not be shown how to do it safely, given its stage of development?

Other aspects of current educational assumptions that need serious reconsideration are the notions of "fixed I.Q." and the notion that ability is strongly related to socio-economic status. Since the disappearance of standard provincial exams both of these notions are convenient means for sorting out children. But they are not based on any serious research. Prior to the invention of psychological testing, mainly as a result of the needs of the American military in the First World War, "intelligence" was a notion more closely akin to "information" or "knowledge." It was thought that the development of universal compulsory school systems would not only improve the "intelligence" of the individual but also raise the "intelligence" of a nation. This sense is still more important than the notion of a kind of genetically pre-determined cleverness which is part of the mystical essence of an individual and not amenable to change. Indeed, there is no evidence for this latter notion, although, of course, there is overwhelming evidence for the view that individuals differ in co-ordination, memory retention, height, weight, health, need for exercise, delight in mental or physical activities, and so on indefinitely.

Towards a Picture of an "Ideal" Classroom for the 21st Century

From the truth there is in Plato, Locke, and Rousseau, I derive the following educational principles.

1. Each child wants to and is capable of learning anything, and it is the prime responsibility of the teacher to see that for each child learning takes place.
2. Each child must be treated as capable and the teacher must spend the time necessary to enable a child to overcome any difficulties.
3. This means that the task of the elementary teacher becomes analogous to that of the physician, namely, diagnosis and treatment of the learning difficulties of any child. (This principle repudiates the views of Rousseau since, for him, there should be no learning difficulties.)
4. The teacher is responsible for organizing the optimal sequences of material for the students under her or his care so that the curricular objectives one would have for the best and the brightest students may be achieved by all.
5. The curriculum in the elementary years must consist of the necessary, standard things which all members of society should know. It is the teacher's responsibility to see that all children master the rudiments of these things as preliminaries to more advanced, and more independent work, and as the necessary knowledge and skills for a citizen to possess. (Plato and Locke could be said to support this principle.)
6. In sum, it is always the pupil who learns; but the pupil learns with the aid of a teacher. (Only the philosophies of Plato and Locke lend support for the last half of this principle.)

Curriculum

If the ultimate goal is to prepare children to think well and independently, then they must possess the means which enable such thought to take place. For example, thinking well in history cannot be accomplished simply by listing dates or copying material into a notebook and then memorizing it, although dates and memorization have a place too. Children must learn about the kind of evidence which there is for historical claims; they should have a chance to read the literature of the historical topic, problem, epoch, or era they are considering; they should have a chance to examine, at least in a limited way, the archaeological or demographic findings bearing on their topic, problem, epoch, or era. And thinking well in history is quite a different thing from thinking well in mathematics or in some aspect of natural science, although, to be sure, there are analogies and parallels. In each of these examples, for the child to learn, the teacher must aid all along the line.

In order for students to work independently they must first possess the prior skills and knowledge which enable independent work to be possible. This is parallel to the teaching of swimming or tennis where certain elementary matters of skill and knowledge must be mastered before the next step is possible. Thus students cannot be simply left to try to discover how to do a project, prepare an oral presentation, or start a class newspaper. They must be given specific skills and knowledge by direct instruction first. Only then can they be in a position to engage in worthwhile activity independently.

This is really a detailed spelling out of Principle 5. It might be summarized by saying that in an "ideal" classroom, as I envisage it, the teacher organizes a coherent curriculum aimed at the most able students and teaches the preliminary and necessary knowledge and skills directly to each pupil, individually where necessary, making sure that each pupil masters these. And then the teacher encourages independent application and thought involving these mastered skills and knowledge.

Use of Resources

A teacher should always prepare a comprehensive syllabus or curriculum covering every item of study, and have a list of all the available resources for each subject and topic. This should include not only books and audio-visual resources but also such resources as the Ontario Science Centre, museums, the Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, the Provincial Parliament, conservation areas, etc. In addition, parents should be identified who have special skills or knowledge.

Skills

Any child coming into a teacher's class deficient in basic skills (phonics, grammar, math, etc.) must be immediately identified by the teacher and the teacher must develop an immediate remedial program for that pupil to ensure that those skills are acquired. Parents should be involved where possible. It is only when all of the elementary skills, and their subsequent more complicated analogues, are mastered that all children can benefit from a program aimed at the highest ability and skill level in a given classroom.

Furthermore, as soon as a skill is mastered it must have a practical application so that it can be maintained. For example, to encourage reading, since it is a skill which always needs maintenance, a child might be encouraged to read science experiments and demonstrate them to the class. There is lots of material of this sort appropriate to any level.

It is important to emphasize that all children must be involved actively and that at the same time direct instructional methods must be employed so that all students cover the entire body of skills and knowledge outlined in the curriculum as arranged by the teacher.

Unity of Theory and Practice

Every topic taught should, if possible, have an immediate and practical application. Children vary in what "turns them on." So here such activities as a classroom newspaper, stamp clubs, rock and mineral clubs, and the like can function as practical applications for skills and knowledge acquired directly in the classroom. Such clubs can meet at lunch and, in my experience, they can provide a basis for a life-long interest and even form the beginnings of a professional career. When students acquire an interest in what is taught in school, because it has an application of this kind for them, they often change from poor or mediocre students to excellent ones.

An Outline of a Sample Curriculum for Grades 2 and 3

Here is an example of the kind of curriculum I used in Grades 2 and 3 for a number of years. In implementing it I am sure that I sometimes fell short of my ideal. But I offer it as an illustration of how curriculum and principles interrelate in the practical problem of offering a definite program in Grades 2 and 3.

It is important to re-emphasize that I considered myself, the teacher, accountable for the progress of *all* the students, that if a student failed to learn some part of this curriculum, I considered it to be my failure.

My example curriculum is given under the following heads:

ART: Crayons and paint; crayon-paint; rubbings, starting with simple things and proceeding to more complicated rubbings (this might culminate in a visit to a church to do brass rubbings). Elementary perspective — making centre-pieces for Christmas using cones, shells; observing clouds for art and poetry; making a film strip and dubbing in voices; seasonal art; special projects.

MUSIC: Clapping to learn beat; Orff music if possible; singing (keep song book); Christmas performance, etc.

CREATIVE WRITING: Friday was culture day in our classroom. Children wrote stories which were typed and illustrated, and each child had a collection in the "book." Stories were placed in the library, as were their individual projects. Each term, one oral presentation and one project was expected and marked.

SCIENCE-PHYSICAL: Matter, three substances and their characteristics; light, sound, heat, magnets, and electricity; simple machines; forms of energy including the sun and nuclear energy; in physical science, regular hands-on workshops so that every child had experience linking theory to practice.

SCIENCE-BIOLOGICAL: A good microscope is required so children can learn to make slides and to observe microscopic life; characteristics of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, fish, insects, and microscopic life; food web; ecology.

SCIENCE-EARTH: Our round earth, its water, its continents; how it changes — erosion, volcanoes; rocks and minerals; Canada — our country, provinces, the Great Lakes, capitals, and how we make our living.

HISTORY: Review Stone Age. Study ancient civilizations — Egypt, Greece, Rome. Brief look at Medieval Europe.

HEALTH: Food groups; care of body and teeth; the systems of the human body; how to keep healthy.

LANGUAGE: Intensive phonics; formal grammar and spelling; lessons in poetry, sentence structure, and paragraphs.

MATH: Times tables, patterns in numbers, number facts, geometry, logic games, multiplication to two digits, division, and long division, and problem solving.

GAMES AND PLAY: The feature of play that seems so often absent is intellectual play. Open the Atlas at Africa, find Timbuktu, when you can spell it, put your hand up. Scramble 40 science words for Friday's spelling lesson after the test. List 25 points of longitude and latitude and have the children discover the city closest to the points. The list can be extended indefinitely in the hands of an imaginative teacher.

There is much I have omitted in trying to present a picture of an ideal classroom for the early grades. Even a book would hardly be enough to present the picture in full. But let me just re-emphasize the essence of the "ideal" I have tried to characterize.

First, my "ideal" classroom is teacher directed and aimed at the success of each and every student.

Second, the methods suggested for application in such a classroom are supported by 2,500 years of successful teaching in the West and a growing body of contemporary research. I mention only two, that of Douglas Carnine in the U.S. which has been successful in showing that students from poor home environments can compete at higher grade levels, and that of Feuerstein in Israel in which I.Q. scores of children have been increased from low to normal.

Third, I am commited to the view that knowledge of the rules of phonetics, grammar, and spelling are qualities of a "literate" person in the larger sense of the word. One cannot call a person who speaks without knowing which tense he is using, truly "literate." A person who has knowledge of grammatical rules will be a better speaker and writer. He or she will be able to ascertain whether an expression or form is correct, instead of blindly using a wrong expression for years on end.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

In your February, 1990 issue you published a brief article called "The Primary Program — Dream or Nightmare," authored by Anne Kanert of "Concerned Parents of Etobicoke." In it, the author argues that there is solid, research-based evidence that young children should be taught in a more direct, and less independent way than Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines suggest. That, she asserts, is what researchers have found to be developmentally appropriate: a sequence from dependence on others towards increasing self-direction, rather than what she believes present Ministry guidelines support, namely independent inquiry at the kindergarten level and in the early grades, gradually followed by more structured orientation at intermediate and senior levels.

She cites four references in support of her contention that young children need direct teaching much or most of the time. These are Gage (1978, 1985); Good (1985); Peterson et al. (1980); and Miller (1981).

Gage's 1978 book *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching* reviews the literature on teaching in the early grades, and compares studies of direct and "open" teaching. And indeed Gage does find in favour of direct teaching. He acknowledges that the studies are limited, and many are flawed, but clearly feels that the weight of the evidence is in favour of direct instruction, or traditional methods, rather than more innovative or less directive techniques. But by 1985, in *Hard Gains in the Soft Sciences*, Gage's message has altered appreciably. By then, he had been involved in a meta-analysis of the more than 150 studies on this topic then in print. The conclusion of that analysis was that "this careful examination of a large, well-nigh exhaustive collection of studies indicated that open education had no advantage or disadvantage when it came to academic achievement but a fairly consistent and moderately substantial advantage when it came to such outcomes as creativity, independence, and attitudes towards the school and the teacher" (p. 17). Ms. Kanert chose to represent Gage's earlier work only, and to misrepresent what he clearly felt to be a position based on much stronger subsequent evidence.

The Peterson et al. article is called "Aptitude-Treatment Interaction Effects on Three Social Studies Teaching Approaches." It compares lecture-recitation, inquiry, and public issues discussion as three teaching approaches in ninth-grade social studies classes. The study had nothing in the world to do with primary age children. It is apparently included by Ms. Kanert because one finding was that the lecture-recitation approach got superior results when an experimenter-constructed test was the outcome measure (but not when another measure of student performance was used).

Ms. Kanert chose to represent Gage's earlier work only, and to misrepresent what he clearly felt to be a position based on much stronger subsequent evidence.

Miller's article, similarly, seems to have next to no bearing on Ms. Kanert's argument. It is about "Conceptual Matching Models and Interactional Research in Education," and reviews theory and research on conceptual matching models (the notion of fitting teaching style to learning style or level of cognitive development). It concludes that "the majority of studies reviewed exhibit numerous design problems. . . . It is noted that the Conceptual System matching model has yet to be adequately tested under genuinely pedagogic conditions and that this is especially true of the developmental match" (p. 33). One is genuinely puzzled as to why Ms. Kanert thinks the Miller article is helpful to her argument.

Finally, the Good article "Classroom Research: A Decade of Progress" discusses several topics including "active teaching." He argues that some teachers are more effective than others in terms of the outcomes for student achievement; and that teachers trained in "active teaching" can make a positive difference in student learning. Active teaching is defined as: being "more active in presenting concepts, explaining the meaning of these concepts, providing appropriate practice activities, and monitoring those activities prior to assigning seatwork" (p. 137). Good explains, "In active teaching, it is hypothesized that the initial style can be inductive or deductive, and student learning can be self-initiated or teacher-initiated . . . and I believe active teaching should become somewhat less direct as students become more mature and instructional goals become concerned with affective and process outcomes" (pp. 138–139). In other words, Good is not talking about direct teaching, and he is not citing research on direct teaching. Rather, he is describing a concept, which he calls active teaching, which is a descriptor for a set of teaching/learning activities which can equally well be student or teacher initiated, and no more clearly linked to "direct" or "traditional" than to "non-direct" or "open" or "non-traditional" teaching techniques.

As for the developmental match, Good's statement, which is a "somewhat" statement, is based on a belief about affective and process outcomes, not achievement in Ms. Kanert's sense at all, I think. And even that is a belief, a postulate, not a conclusion based on data.

For readers who are genuinely interested in the evidence on direct instruction versus active learning, Gage's 1985 review, cited but ignored by Ms. Kanert, is a far better guide than her article, which does not inform us further, and purports to arrive at a conclusion based on evidence which is notably absent in the references she cites.

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For How Long Can Research Be Ignored?

Anne Kanert

Concerned Parents of Etobicoke

Ms. Ziegler's review is interesting — *NOT* because of the references she discusses, but because of the ones she chooses to ignore. I cited not four but *fourteen* references in support of my argument that young children need more direct teaching than older students.

The most compelling evidence that children in the primary grades need higher levels of direct instruction can be found in the study by Usher and Evans (1978) which was commissioned by the Etobicoke Board of Education. Contrary to the expectations that students in the play program would be superior to students in more teacher-directed classes in certain areas (oral language development, fine motor skills, problem solving, social skills, and conceptual reasoning), Usher and Evans found *no* differences between the two groups in these domains. In addition, academic performance *was* significantly poorer in the play-type classes in the following areas: Stanford mathematics concepts, reading of the Primer passage, and informal reading of paragraphs.

These findings were clearly disappointing for a Board which had moved in the direction set out by the British Infant School "play" model, wherein each child learns at his/her individual rate; opportunities for self-direction are numerous; there are many opportunities to explore and manipulate materials; little or no emphasis is placed on external correction or feedback; whole word recognition rather than systematic phonics is emphasized; and children read self-composed stories rather than basal readers.

One might have expected that the poor performance of children in the play-type program would have caused some concern among those who set the guidelines for the education of our children, and that the classroom procedures would have been modified to guarantee that our children receive quality education. The results of the study seem to have been interpreted rather differently, however: *not* as a threat to our children's education, but rather as a threat to an educational system which had hailed the play and discovery program as a way of improving both academic and social skills. The reaction of the Etobicoke School Board twelve years ago is the same as Ms. Ziegler's, speaking for the Toronto Board of Education, is to-day: to *ignore* the study, even though the findings of Usher and Evans have recently been re-analyzed and published in one of the world's foremost reading publications (Evans & Carr, 1985).

> *Society as a whole would reap the benefits if the educational system in Ontario focussed on the best interests of the children rather than on the reputation of its policy makers.*

The Usher and Evans research has also been validated by a recent extensive overview of over 150 primary and secondary sources on teacher effectiveness by G. Patrick O'Neill of Brock University. He comes to the following universal conclusion:

"Direct instruction is highly associated with increased learning gains among primary children from working and middle class backgrounds. However, the effects appear to be more pronounced for low-ability pupils with an external locus of control (1988, p. 173).

Usher and Evans are not the *only* researchers, then, who have found that students in the primary grades need higher levels of direct instruction, and not the *only* ones systematically ignored by the Ontario education system. Reuven Feuerstein, who was able to help orphans sent to Israel after World War II and the ravages of the Holocaust, is also consistently ignored. Yet his concept of "mediation" by a concerned adult would surely help those children most in need: the culturally disadvantaged, those from broken homes, immigrant children from war-torn countries, and so on.

In the references Ms. Ziegler *does* cite, her selection bias ignores any statements in favour of direct instruction. The "active teaching" method proposed by Good (1983) and the effective teaching methods Gage (1985) describes are, after all, fairly close to what many parents expect the school system to deliver. Few parents would, I believe, wish a return to a totally regimented primary program where children never leave their desks and are drilled all day. Even those classrooms labelled "teacher-directed" in the Usher/Evans study had an average ratio of 60 percent teacher-led group instruction to 40 percent independent activities. This is surely not an unreasonable "balance."

Society as a whole would reap the benefits if the educational system in Ontario focussed on the best interests of the children rather than on the reputation of its policy makers. The Primary "play" program, by now a relic of a 1960s-style utopian "dream," needs to be brought into line with the research data on effective teaching strategies that have accumulated over the last two decades. "Active Learning" can only be achieved if there is also "Active Teaching." The concept of the teacher as a mere "facilitator" needs to be relegated to the dustbin of history.

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Pour le maintien de la langue française en Ontario

CREFO JOUE UN ROLE ACTIF

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Le Centre de recherches en éducation franco-ontarienne, ou CREFO, est l'un des centres internes de l'Institut et le seul à fonctionner en français.

La création du CREFO remonte à juillet 1977, époque où la Section franco-ontarienne (établie en 1972) accédait au statut de Centre interne de l'IEPO. Depuis ce temps le CREFO joue un rôle actif auprès de la communauté éducative franco-ontarienne dans les trois domaines du mandat de l'IEPO, soit la recherche, le développement régional et les études supérieures. Un de ses objectifs est d'**aider au maintien de la langue et de la culture françaises en Ontario.**

Voilà un défi de taille car, comme le souligne la Fédération des jeunes canadiens-français dans son étude de 1988 intitulée *L'Assimilation : le défi des jeunes d'aujourd'hui et de demain*, l'Ontario présente un taux d'assimilation chez les jeunes francophones de 15 à 19 ans de 25 pour cent et de 34 pour cent chez celles et ceux de 20 à 24 ans. Il y a des régions comme le Centre et le Sud-Ouest ontariens où le taux d'assimilation atteint des proportions alarmantes : l'assimilation progresse deux fois plus rapidement dans ces régions qu'ailleurs dans la province. Le rapport *Profile of the Franco-Ontarian Community* (D. Savas, 1988) souligne que dans le Centre et le Sud-Ouest, près de deux francophones sur trois perdent la capacité de s'exprimer dans leur langue maternelle au cours de leur vie, alors que dans l'Est et le Nord-Est, le taux d'assimilation est d'environ 25 pour cent. Ce facteur explique en partie pourquoi le groupe des 25 ans ou moins forme seulement le quart de la population du Centre et du Sud-Ouest, alors que dans l'Est et le Nord, ce groupe représente plus de 40 pour cent de la population.

Mais comment les communautés éducatives peuvent-elles développer la fierté de la langue et de la culture françaises et développer le sentiment d'appartenance auprès des jeunes francophones ? Notre réponse s'offre ici avec la description de projets préparés par le CREFO qui visent la promotion et le maintien de la langue française dans les écoles franco-ontariennes : «La famille Marsolais (1749-1763) : création de scénarios», «Coopération et découverte» et «L'accès aux études postsecondaires et aux carrières non traditionnelles»

Comment les communautés educatives peuvent-elles développer la fierté de la langue et de la culture françaises et développer le sentiment de appartenance?

«La famille Marsolais» est un projet évoquant la période de 1749 à 1763, période où les Canadiens-Français se sont installés en permanence dans ce qui est aujourd'hui la province de l'Ontario. C'était aussi l'époque des dernières batailles entre les Anglais et les Français en Amérique et des débuts de l'agriculture dans le Sud-Ouest ontarien.

Dans ce projet d'histoire on a créé quatre jeux de simulation utilisant des logiciels permettant de retracer l'histoire des Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens. Les logiciels produits seront utilisés principalement par les élèves de 7e et 8e années des écoles franco-ontariennes. Les textes ont été remis à la firme torontoise IIT (Interactive Image Technologies Ltd.) et on prévoit que les logiciels seront distribués dans toutes les écoles françaises de l'Ontario au printemps de 1991.

Les projets «Coopération et découverte» et «L'accès aux études postsecondaires et aux carrières non traditionnelles» ont déjà été décris dans cette chronique en octobre 1989 et en avril 1990.

«Coopération et découverte» se compose de matériel pédagogique coopératif pour l'enseignement en français langue première et langue seconde et il a été créé pour tenter de répondre aux problèmes posés par l'hétérogénéité (géographique, culturelle, sociale) des salles de classe et par l'accès difficile au français en dehors de l'école. Ainsi, grâce à différents modules pédagogiques («Activités préparatoires», «Publicité», «Reportage» et «Histoire»), les élèves doivent utiliser le français dans une plus grande variété de situations de communication et ils/elles peuvent également mieux connaître la communauté francophone locale. Un vidéo d'initiation à la méthode ainsi qu'un guide pédagogique complètent la trousse.

«L'accès aux études postsecondaires et aux carrières non traditionnelles» tente d'exercer une influence plus directe sur le choix de carrières non traditionnelles pour les jeunes Franco-Ontariennes et Franco-Ontariens et de sensibiliser ces jeunes à l'importance de poursuivre des études postsecondaires, afin de participer aux transformations technologiques et scientifiques qui modifient les rapports sociaux de la société où ils se trouvent.

Ce document est présenté sous forme de trousse qui contient une pochette d'information et cinq activités pédagogiques («Une étude comparative», «Une étude des stéréotypes sexuels», «Créer une image de son avenir», «Créer une biographie», «Les débouchés dans les domaines des sciences et de la technologie»).

Le matériel relié à ces deux derniers projets est en vente au Centre franco-ontarien de ressources pédagogiques : (613) 238-7957.

LOYAL OPPOSITION

TALES

from the School

Contexts of Policy Action

WHAT unites the four authors storming the barricades in this issue is an initial feeling that wrong policies are being pursued. Simultaneously, right people — including loyalists to the organization — are being ignored. Hoping to spur fellow-educators to discuss hitherto undiscussibles of their operations, the authors symbolize the continual opposition, lurking in schools, to imprudent governance.

In the first two tales, dissenters' points are not being heard or acted upon within their immediate milieu. Ann Hill may have a need for a key to the building while Diane Hutchinson's central figure may have expertise as a teacher-librarian. Yet their realities are not being integrated into the dominant reckonings of their organizations' problems.

Probably more of a fair-play approach to change and stability typifies activities depicted in the other tales. For both, staff are attuned to norms outside their local settings. In B.C. Hawkins' account, administrators at Meech Secondary mellow one of their decisions so that, as preferred by members of a faculty committee, some but not all work is redistributed. At Natalie Tim's Marycroft, teachers suspend skepticism to collaborate with a well-liked colleague. Just as the "ever-helpful" Bill had proposed, exams are rescheduled, at least tentatively.

Tales enjoys loyal opposition itself. At right, a letter takes exception to an earlier tale. The author then replies that the letter-writer is herself pursuing a wrong policy.

-R.T. & E.C.

Wendy Nurgitz writes:
THE final paragraph, in the article on preparation time (February, 1990) clearly outlines resource shortages associated with prep time. The major portion of the tale, however, is a series of whiny anecdotes which border on unprofessional behaviour, serving no purpose.

Metropolitan Toronto elementary teachers made a major investment in the achievement of prepreparation time. The 18-day strike of 1987 was an emotional, professional, and financial hardship for all of us. But in the end we won recognition for preparation time as a valuable resource. There isn't a teacher association in Canada that does not support and recognize the importance of that first, major step.

As with anything new, implementation takes time. We will have to continue to negotiate with boards to increase staffing for preparation time and numbers of minutes per teacher. When those two figures are satisfactory, we will be able, universally and consistently, to benefit students and teachers.

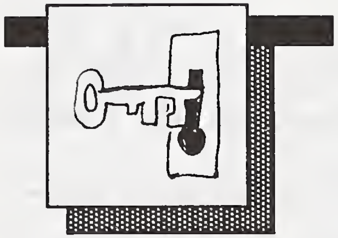
Those who expect perfection from the start (Emily Tailor perhaps?) are bound to be sadly disappointed. As professionals and members of a collective, we owe it to ourselves to promote continued negotiation of preparation time provisions, and to maintain commitment to that goal. Whining is counterproductive. To gain acceptance we must emphasize successes, not problems.

Preparation time is not a policy! School boards can unilaterally establish policy! Preparation time is a contract provision that we negotiated in the collective agreement. It is not preparation time that defeats its purpose. It is obdurate school boards that strive to retract hard-won preparation time by putting up barriers to its successful implementation. ❑

Emily Tailor replies:
IT is not likely that anyone associated with the elementary teachers' strike back in 1987 will dispute Ms. Nurgitz's description of the hardship endured at that time. However, those "whiny anecdotes" in the tale depict a realistic account of an informal discussion. Their complaints clearly are not directed at the concept of prep time, but at effects of its implementation due to the policy (or, yes, the lack of policy) as adopted in their school and as reflecting what their Board thinks is good staffing.

Nevertheless, Ms. Nurgitz's charge that such an informal discussion borders on unprofessional behaviour should concern any member of a free society. The teachers' right to voice their dissatisfactions with any issue is as legitimate as Ms. Nurgitz's right to express her opinion. But, curiously, she implies that, as "members of a collective," they should be muzzled from speaking out about that collective's negotiation.

I for one hope *Tales* will continue to tell about teachers who are similarly disappointed and occasionally satisfied by events resulting from conflict and policy negotiations within contexts of their schools. May they continue to express their beliefs, problems, and desires in efforts to improve life in schools. ❑



UNLOCKING IDEOLOGIES

How School Security Can Become an Issue

by Ann Hill

AN uneasy silence followed her request. Glances were exchanged, eyebrows lifted, and someone cleared his/her throat as if to clear the tension. Our rookie principal, "Jennifer," noticing this interplay of messages, continued while trying to soften her request: "I need to know who has keys to the school for matters of security. We need to have all keys returned; I have to provide our new part-time caretaker with a key. She'll be working the evening shift when Hal (our regular caretaker) won't be here." Looking around at the faces of staff at her first staff meeting, Jennifer then cautiously asked, "Is there a problem that I should know about?"

"Babs," our senior grade 1 teacher, gently explained in a soft, non-threatening voice. She said that the school had 5 security keys and that last summer the staff had decided (with the former principal's blessing) that she, Babs, should keep a key. It would be for the 7 out of our 12 teachers who lived in "Leith," a good 25 kilometres from the school. Another Leith teacher added that, as a group who wanted to prepare

members, it seemed to represent more than just physical access to the building. It was a value statement that teachers should have the right and the power to enter the building on their own time, at their own convenience, and at their own sayso without the supervision of either principal or caretaker.

While I believed this as a matter of trust, it seemed prudent to check out others' realities on this point, and so I approached our local source of information, our mild-mannered, easy-going secretary, "June." On asking who had keys to the school, June became flustered and asserted in a defensive tone, "I do!" She remarked that she knew that it wasn't 'normal,' and that keeping it was a burden of responsibility. But if she was expected to do work on her own time, then it had to be at least at her discretion. Jennifer, the incoming principal, knew about this arrangement and hadn't asked for the key to be returned. Then, as if embarrassed by her unusual intensity, June joked, "It'd be a lot easier if we had a cat door, like I do at home!" She added that she did let teachers borrow her key, though she felt uneasy about it.

Deciding to explore this sense of unease and great responsibility that June felt, I began to research Board policy on keys. Policy No. 613, under the Security section of Property and Plant Operation, formally decreed that issuance of keys to exterior doors should be restricted to principals, vice-principals, head custodians, and additional persons designated by the principal, not to exceed the limit established by the Board (which in a school the size of ours would be 3). The policy went on to indicate that a

als' access to their places of work not be limited either. A number of staff members later pointed out, somewhat cynically, that it was very much in our Board's interest to have its teachers working in the school during non-school hours.

A few weeks later, Babs shuffled into my classroom. She wanted me to know that a key wasn't in Leith because Jennifer had taken it back — for the new custodian.

Behind Closed Doors

The topic came up again one day in the staffroom when June asked one of the teachers if she still had June's key. Seeing an opening, I posed a general question: "Who do you feel should have keys to the building?". Immediately "Bonnie" replied adamantly that possession of the key should reside with the principal and custodian. Her answer was met with vocal agreement by two other staff members. Their justification: *1)* the principal and custodian were responsible for the school's security, and *2)* the Board had to protect its property, especially in light of arson attacks on some schools during the summer.

With a perplexed grimace, "Sonia" then asked why teachers couldn't also be responsible for the security of the building. The pro-Bonnie contingent explained that certain teachers couldn't be trusted and veiled references were made to last year's after-classes incident when school doors had been left open and lights on. The teacher-librarian threw in that it was rather odd that the custodian and secretary were trusted with the school building but that teachers were not. Bonnie replied by declaring

A discussion with Dan soon revealed the location of the building's fifth key. Eager to justify his loan, Dan claimed that he needed a key because of all the sports and computing activities for which he was responsible, and so, in a private interview, he had petitioned Jennifer's approval. Hurriedly, he added that his key was to be used as a loan to other staff members. When asked if other staff teachers knew he had a lender key, Dan shrugged his shoulder — with a look that reminded me of a child caught with his hand in the cookie jar — and said, "I don't know." At the risk of seeming mean-spirited, at the time I wondered if Dan might use the key as a power tool, relishing that we other members of the staff would have to ask *his* permission to enter the building.

The Chain of Command

Wondering what significance the key had for the custodian, I took the opportunity to put that question to Hal when he came in to clean my room that afternoon. With a lean on his broom, Hal told me how his supervisor had told him that only the principal and the custodian were to have keys. Hal believed that this should be so, because if something went wrong, surely blame would fall on his shoulders. After a pause, Hal went on to add that he didn't mind if certain, but not all, teachers had keys.

Overwhelmed by the lack of communication between principal and staff and amongst staff themselves, I made my way to the principal's office. Like Hal, Jennifer thought that the school building was a personal responsibility that could be shared by just a select few. She explained that only a limited number of

necessary to do so. She had to use the key for agendas such as keeping the secretary happy.

As guardian of the keys, Jennifer desired to be a policy-fixer who could structure the policy to suit local needs. But she saw the need to give some ground to those staff members who supported easy access to the building. Bureaucratic imperatives limited Jennifer's actions, however, for as a new principal she did not want to be caught napping in security matters. She was also careful to maintain her authority to decide who held the key and who did not.

So what does this key crisis signify for policy development in general? At the very least, one could hypothesize that success can be achieved if a spirit of openness infuses the policy process, and expectations on all sides are articulated.

Lack of communication characterizes the practice of the keys' policy, creating confusion. Despite Jennifer's promise to "get back to them," staff have been ignorant of the Board's position. No one has seemed to know who has the keys. In this situation, Jennifer's 'muddling through' was not positive. Designating the secretary as a key-holder sent powerful negative symbols about a lack of trust in teachers as well as negating a staff decision reached the summer before. A staff sign-out sheet would perhaps de-emphasize the subservience of teachers having to ask the principal or secretary for a key. Much more problematic is that Jennifer's action is contradictory to her verbalized desire for a policy that follows school tradition sufficiently and suits teachers' needs. Whilst confusion and our classrooms for the oncoming year, we had chosen Babs as a responsible as well as an easily accessible key-holder. Some heads nodded, with supporting comments, about this staff-initiated policy.

Looking around, Jennifer stated in a firm voice that she would look up Board policy about keys. In a lighter voice she promised to get back to us. As staff broke into several conversations, my colleague and I exchanged meaningful glances about what a useful tool Board policy was in letting principals off the hook. Having defused the door-key issue, Jennifer moved on to the next item on the agenda. Later on the way out, "Dan," the grade 4 teacher, winked to me and said in a low voice, "I think she's learned that she can't dictate to *this* staff. We're not exactly a meek unthinking group."

The key had become an object representing different constructions of meaning. To many staff limited number of keys should be available at the school office so that staff members might sign them out when required for a specific need which should be recorded. Alongside the policy statement was a memo from the plant assistant asking that all names of staff who possess keys be recorded.

The Board's policy seemed an attempt to balance conflicting ideologies. On one hand, Policy 613 expressed clear regulations about who was to have keys under the banner of safe security, thereby denying the idea that every teacher should have access to the school whenever she or he deemed it necessary. Although provisions for teacher entry were made, they were carefully conditioned by sign-out measures and principal supervision. On the other hand, Policy 613 was attempting to recognize the professionalism of teaching staff and that—much as professional work is not limited to school hours—logic demanded that professionthat ideally the principal should unlock the door for teachers who need entry and lock up again when the teacher left. When asked if this was her habit, Bonnie advised, "Oh no, I just borrow June's key whenever I need it." Next, and perhaps to divert attention away from her blatant contradiction, Bonnie asserted that *1)* more careful planning by teachers would take care of any problem and *2)* very seldom did teachers truly need to get into the building once the caretaker had gone. Howls of protest arose from other teachers who thought her statement untrue, unhelpful.

When "Rob" offered his contribution, all eyes met his, for Rob had been a principal, well-regarded in the county. He thought that for the sake of security, the number of keys had to be limited, but that a senior teacher — from whom the school key could be borrowed — should be selected by staff. When asked if as a principal he would loan his key to staff members, he responded, "Of course, even if it was against Board policy."

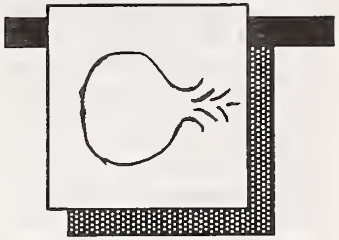
Although pleasant tones were maintained, tension grew as staff members found their own ideals did not correspond with their realities and that the symbol of the key was not a universally shared one. Likely in recognition of this, staff started conversing in smaller groups where a variety of stories were told: stories of the "old days" when teachers didn't even possess keys to their rooms; stories of other schools where educators were irresponsible in using keys; stories of schools in which all teachers were given keys; and stories of teachers' keeping keys to former schools where they had worked.

Who says there's equal access in education?

keys could be "out" because in the event of a break-in, the police had to know — within so many unspecified minutes — where the serial-numbered keys were; the principal had to be accountable. Jennifer added that ideally she would like *all* staff members to have keys, as it was their school, but Board policy made that impossible.

To the Board (through its policy documents), the disposition of a key seemed a simple matter but at this school that item represented much more. Fact is, the Board's straight-forward regulatory policy multiplied into various ideologies and differing values as the key took on new symbolic meaning for each person. It was interpreted as a burden of great responsibility and accountability, as a symbol of a lack of trust of professional staff, and as a symbol of power, namely the power to decide who should possess an open-sesame and the power to grant or deny others' requests for access. Assuredly, the key also was a status symbol, with its possession signalling that the holder had importance. Ambiguity and inconsistency characterized this supposedly controlling policy, as some staff members found that they had to rationalize their beliefs when their ideals did not fit their realities. Jennifer, for example, desired a decentralized, workable policy based on staff needs but found that she couldn't afford relinquishing the power ambiguity are to be expected (given that policy is never an objective neutral set of words), it appears that this collective misunderstanding is not productive.

A few days later as I was walking past the office, I chanced to see the novice young grade 8 teacher handing over a key to Jennifer. As I moved closer, I heard her say with an embarrassed look, "I'm so sorry, this should have been given back earlier." Jennifer nodded with a brief smile, firmly took the key, and dropped it into her desk drawer. ❑



UNLEASHING CREATIVITY

Collaborative Planning As a Criminal Offence

by Diane Hutchinson

WHEN the hall clock registers 7:45 a. m. "Lakeside" School is alive and functioning, as many staff members go through their daily rituals of preparation. Every morning until first bell, staff enter the Resource Centre in a steady flow, coffee cup in hand, to perform a task that practically had become second nature: duplicating and copying materials that are to be dispersed to students throughout the instructional day. This routine involves the services of a media specialist, whose role description guarantees compliance. "Mrs. Ryan" watches this prime hub of activity from the library she supervises.

In the past, Mrs. Ryan's discussions with individual teachers usually had revolved around the availability of materials. If resources were not readily available within that library, or could not be borrowed from another school or commercial agency, she had not hesitated to help design products that sometimes resulted from the combining and altering of copyright documents. This directly had involved Mrs. Ryan in a dilemma that encompassed copyright law and pitted it against a pedagogy that valued spontaneity and creativity.

For a long time, she had solved this dilemma by focusing on her commitment to the philosophy of resource-based learning. Consistently, she had reaffirmed her belief by (actively) participating as a collaborative teacher and technician on her school's teaching team. Now she realized that her conscience had not been fully awakened.

"Like many teachers," Mrs. Ryan reflects, "I tended to regard copyright infringement as the moral equivalent of driving through a yellow light. I viewed it as a slight illegality that was no more than a petty nuisance." Existing and anticipated legislation did not affect her day-to-day functioning, or so she thought. "The spirit duplicators had not

At one of Lakeside's regular staff meetings, Mrs. Ryan introduced the Board's new hard-line approach. Employing a handful of visual aids to capture attention, she attempted to communicate this policy in a meaningful format.

The majority of the staff seemed to experience difficulty in feigning interest, however. Plainly, most colleagues, like her previous self, did not identify with this issue. As one staff member retorted as she hurried on to her next class, "I'll become more personally concerned when my colleagues are being prosecuted for breaking this law. I don't see that happening."

After Mrs. Ryan's presentation of copyright policy, lineups at the photocopier machine, now referred to as the "copyright-buster," were just as long. Reproduced masses of paper continued to be placed into students' hands. "Staff here aren't interested in the importance of the copyright law to the life and economy of creativity," Mrs. Ryan concluded. "Lakeside is

culture as to holding that "theft is theft."

Resources Run Dry?

Let's do a retrospective. The Board's policy position, paralleling one from the Mowat Block, had opposed infringement of copyright for classroom learning materials. Teachers were to communicate with their media department if they came across resource material they wanted to use, and that department would inquire if reproduction rights were available for purchase. The availability of learning materials was held to be in jeopardy if creators would not receive financial returns from users of those materials.

Granted, Mrs Ryan had not been thrilled that the Board — responding to higher levels of government — had formulated this policy in a top-down, "do-it-my-way" method. Administrators and trustees had developed the policy to protect the Board from being involved in lawsuits that they expected would increase dramatically with Bill C-60's passage. Targeted were teacher-librarians. As major infringers of copyright, due to lack of acquisition budgets and access to a technology that made piracy tempting, they were seen as having influence in this matter within schools.

Quite incrementally, Mrs. Ryan "bought in," coming around to appreciate that board policy was necessary as a protective device against present or future litigation. As members of an educational institution, users had to be made aware of government mechanisms that would allow enforcement of the law. Certain

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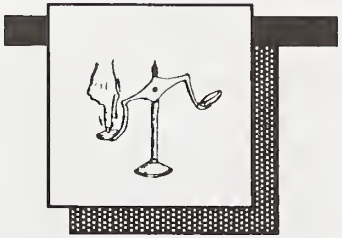

NOT ANOTHER PINK SLIP

About Justice For Teachers

by B. C. Hawkins

THEY'RE called pink slips, blue slips or on-calls: they're a fact of life in most secondary schools. Whenever a teacher is out of class coaching, on a field trip, or for a meeting, another teacher is called in to cover the absent teacher's class. Secondary school teachers look upon on-calls as one of the necessary evils of having a "free period" built into their timetables. Like death, taxes, and staff meetings, on-calls are inevitable.

"Meech" Secondary School has an on-call system like almost every other secondary school in Ontario. That in itself is not unusual until one realizes that for most of its 25-year existence, it had none. The teaching staff at this comprehensive school consists of 40 classroom teachers, 2 guidance counsellors, and 1 librarian. "Doug," the principal, is a veteran educator of 25 years, most of them as a principal. He's filled this role at Meech for 10 years. "Gary," the v-p, has 8 years of classroom experience.

For many years, Meech had used a prefect system to cover teachers' classes. Selected students, usually from grades 12 and 13, For next year, I'd like to form a committee and take a new policy to the staff in the spring." Doug agreed but warned Gary, "Ask for ideas from the staff but leave the final decision to you and me." Gary later said that in this pink-slip matter, that was one of the best advisories he'd received.

Shortly after the March Break, Gary brought the matter up at a monthly staff meeting. The very idea of establishing an on-call system was met with an air of resignation by older members of staff: after all, good things don't last forever. Many of the younger teachers, who coached the majority of the teams and were away the most, were more supportive. Their classes needed more coverage than other teachers' and an on-call system would help. In keeping with Doug's advice, Gary asked for any teachers with ideas, questions, or comments to see him.

Over the next three weeks, Gary spent a considerable amount of time discovering that an on-call plan was related to other arenas in the school. "Coverage had to be integrated with study and lunch time supervisions, intramurals, coaching, extra-curricular assignments, and detention room. Then I've got to make sure that the whole package won't generate a grievance with the federation, get it approved by Doug, and sell it all to the staff."

When the policy was presented to the teachers, it seemed relatively simple — on paper. Teacher "X" would have an on-call assignment Monday-Wednesday-Friday of semester 1. "X" would also be assigned a supervised study for part of semester 1 as part of this on-call. Teacher "Y" would cover on-calls Tueslent themselves readily to copying, but now the xerox technology allowed me the advantage of being able to copy at will print and audio-visual works. I had every intention of continuing to use it." Along with others, Mrs. Ryan had believed that such a small infringement of the law was balanced by a fostering of student creativity. "Convenient access to learning materials is essential for my students, and this benefit tends to soothe the pangs of guilt I might at times feel," Mrs. Ryan had insisted. At one point, she equated copyright laws to tax laws. Both, she felt, were examples of government obsolescence.

New Mind Set

Her attitude began adjusting when the Board, taking a tough stand on copyrights, began retraining resource teachers and insisting on their accountability to the law. Now it would be the responsibility of teacher-librarians to inform fellow-staff of constraints on the reproduction of copyrighted materials. "Directive after directive made its way to my office, alerting me to the Board's strict position on enforcement," Mrs. Ryan says. The board was serious and so she sensed that she should be serious on this matter too.

Creators' rights
over
users' creativities

more busy worrying about diversification of program, because of lack of resources, than worrying about litigation over intellectual property."

In time, Mrs. Ryan joined with several other teacher-librarians in attempting to inform a House of Commons committee about the potential negative impact on students of copyright restrictions. That group also pointed to the costs of materials, to certain inadequacies in regulations of collectives of copyright holders, and to problems the proposed legislation would create in dealing with copyright holders who were not members of collectives. Mrs. Ryan's involvement in this political process was changing her compliancy – to proactive attempts to affect an attitude shift towards this policy not only in Ottawa but in her colleagues.

She continued to post numerous articles about copyright issues, all reflecting legal recognition of creators' rights to determine the use of their works and to share economically by their use. She attended a Librarian's Conference to hear the federal Minister of Communication reflect Ottawa's determination to revise the copyright law. The feds appeared just as committed to building a strong, independent, Canadian problems in the legislation should be worked out, Mrs. Ryan had held, but — as unpopular as the law would be among staff — creators' rights had to be emphasized over users' rights.

Nevertheless, the humming and clicking of the xerox continues. Teachers are still committed to seizing the 'teachable moment,' viewing infringement of copyright as innocent, and judging the permission-securing process as too uncertain and time-consuming to bother with. They are failing to take advantage of the availability of Board funds to buy rights for short-term use of copyrighted materials. Even though convicted offenders are now liable on a summary conviction to a maximum fine of $25,000 and/or to a prison term of up to six months, most feel fairly secure in their polarized position. The desire for immediacy in access to materials is not tempered by their feelings of moral or legal responsibilities. Believing that this law will not be acted upon, they regard themselves as safe in deviating from Board and national policy.

Until the law, with its major revisions, is tested in the courts, in most cases spontaneity will deny creators control over their work. So what does this mean for the Board's authority to enforce not simply a policy but a law? If implementation has to depend on the good faith of educational users and how they reconcile their personal needs with the divergent moral and property rights of creators, should copyright policy somehow become one of those policies that are tamper-proof and (audacious as it sounds) even teacher-proof?

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volunteered to monitor classes during their spares. Prefect assignments were coordinated by the chief prefect who worked closely with the v-p. But by the end of the first term two years ago, several problems had become evident.

Each morning, Gary would be seen consulting with the chief prefect. More often than not, the central topic concerned classes which could not be covered. "John's got a chemistry test to study for, Sylvia and Jean are preparing for an oral presentation, the senior basketball team is away, and so I've got no one." A lack of prefects was a common problem particularly on Friday afternoons or near exam time. And some classes, such as basic English, proved difficult to get senior students to handle. In many cases, Gary would have to assign two students to cover a difficult class. "I'd like to use prefects," a teacher might say, "but I'm concerned about how much learning actually goes on." Teachers in the labs, shops, or gyms were also concerned about their liability if a student were hurt while a prefect was overseeing the class.

When these problems came together, Gary could often be seen heading to the staff room with a pile of assignments. Any teacher with a spare who was unlucky enough to cross his path was given an on-call. Ultimately, it was this hit-and-miss system of distributing extra assignments which stimulated our reform.

Advise and Consult

Shortly after his promotion to vice-principal, Gary sat down with Doug and said, "Our prefect system won't cut it anymore. days and Thursdays in semester 1 and would also do lunch duty for part of semester 1. In semester 2, teachers "X" and "Y" would reverse their roles. "It sounds simple in theory," Gary said to staff, "but it turns out to be very complicated to get the numbers of teachers available for on-calls to balance in all periods during both semesters. Throw in the lunch supervision plus all the coaching schedules and, whew, it begins to look like a three-dimensional jigsaw puzzle."

Certain teachers had questions. E.g., "Are all the on-call teams the same size?" To that Gary replied, "No. There's no way to get them exact. I know this means some people will do a few more days of study supervision, but I couldn't get it any better."

For a second query: "Why don't we do away with supervised studies? Everybody knows that most other schools have." "Because," Doug answered with some edge, "in this school, we *will* have supervised studies. That's not negotiable." That holy writ took the pressure off Gary, ending the formal discussion on supervised studies.

Then, "Is everyone included in the on-call system?" "No," returned Gary. "The librarian, the special ed. teachers, the guidance counsellors, the principal, and myself are not included in a regular on-call team. The nature of these jobs doesn't provide for one period off on a regular basis." This answer didn't please classroom teachers, not in the slightest; for most schools in this county, principals, vice-principals, and librarians were not included in on-call coverages but guidance counsellors and special education teachers were.

Opposition to governance by force: a hallmark of our era

- Photo courtesy of Dusan Vaanic

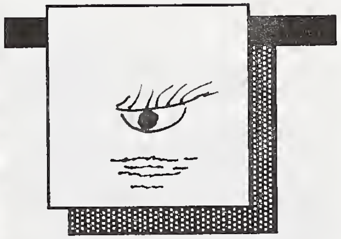
The meeting broke up with the bulk of teachers expressing a guarded support. For his part, Gary looked relieved that the whole encounter was over, and that fewer objections had been raised than he'd anticipated.

Trial and Errors

That September, the policy was implemented. Procedures for handling on-calls were discussed and published in the staff handbook. Safety guidelines for shops, labs, and gyms were developed by department heads. On-call assignment sheets were printed. Each teacher received a school-year calendar with his/her study supervision and lunch supervisions highlighted in different colors. According to Gary, "Now, no one can come back and say 'I didn't know I was on.'"

All in all during that first year, the on-call policy worked reasonably well. True, some problems surfaced. A change in timetabling resulted in the smallest on-call team getting smaller. Certain teachers forgot to hand their assignments in before 3:30 p.m. and so their on-call replacements didn't know until the following day. Shifts occurred in objectives, priorities, and goals (of the organization). Could the policy take root in such unsettled ground? One day the math teacher drove Gary over to another high school, where on-calls were affably handled by all staff. Over a tuna-fish sandwich, the math teacher said,"Our organization should be isomorphic with theirs." "Isomorphic?," Gary questioned, looking around the other school's cafeteria, one calmer than Gary's.

Eventually, Gary budged and a move towards organizational isomorphism and compromise was achieved whereby the counsellors, librarian, and special education teachers would handle classroom on-calls but not study supervisions. These changes represented a more equal distribution of duties among staff and, to give teachers more advance notice of an on-call; some minor changes were made in timelines too. Thereafter, teachers became more understanding of those things that, as anticipated, did go wrong in the unfolding. Satisfactions seemed to increase among Gary (the synthesizer of the problem) and staff (subsequent participants in the problem-solving for our organization). Shifts occurred in ob-



EXAMINING EXAMS

How Democracy Reigns and Consensus Is King

by Natalie Tim

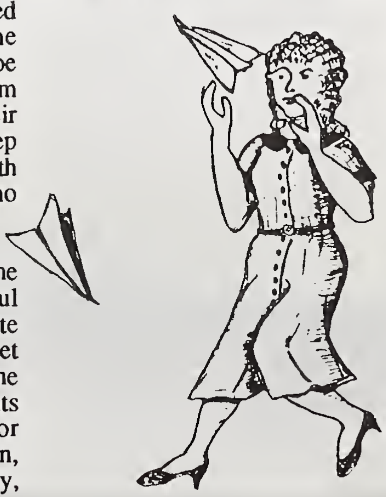
THE intercom switch is on, this Friday morning towards the end of November at "Marycroft Secondary" and "Susan," one of our vice-principals, announces *for that afternoon* a brief but important meeting of all department heads. Tired bodies, with pale and drooping faces, shuffle hours later into the staffroom one by one and plop into couches. Normally we're a friendly crew, but now we're anxious and in a hurry to leave, and we're also irked that a meeting would be called just before a weekend. Some mutter that this had better be important or else. Others seem just too exhausted to open their eyes after they sink into deep sofas. Everyone is curious, with angry comments like, "Who called this meeting anyway?"

First in the room is "Bill," the young, cheerful, ever-helpful head of science. A pile of white sheets of paper lie on the carpet in front of him. After everyone arrives and negative comments flourish about our convenor (whoever *that* is), Bill jumps in, it seems almost apologetically, has to go to the washroom, or leave for some emergency while supervising. Quickly Bill responds that should the need arise, hall supervisors would be available to any teachers. Betty smiles.

"Mathew," an upwardly mobile vice-principal, one foot perched on on his knee, voices a common concern by asking, "What would be done in the event of a discipline problem arising in the classroom? Wouldn't there be trouble with only one teacher on duty?" Whereupon, Bill admits that he isn't sure and that this point is worth discussing. On this, Bill also suggests that he will learn from "Mike," over at "Burton Academy" where the policy has been successful.

To chime in, "Mary" sits forward. "Bill, I have a grade 9 family studies class during period 1 and another grade 9 family studies class during period 4. Does this mean that I would have to write two different grade 9 family studies exams?"

"Yes, it does," Bill asserts, over our expressions of dismay. "I know you all hate the idea right



Although a Friday afternoon like the one we've just had is not the most strategic time to introduce a policy idea, we all agree to float the idea past teachers within our units.

Democracy in Progress

On Monday afternoon, Mary has a meeting with the three other members of her family studies unit. After relaying the information presented — including the negative vibes — at Friday's emergency meeting, she asks for reactions.

"Bea," a frumpy veteran teacher of 15 years, looks as if she might throw a paper airplane by way of token opposition. "I really don't like it," she declares. "I'd prepare three entirely new exams. I'm teaching two senior courses this semester, and I don't think that would be fair. I have too many tasks to do."

"Sandra," a first-year teacher, playing with her hair, mildly adds that "Myself, I don't feel too comfortable about being in a classroom, all alone, during an exam. With that general-level class that I'm teaching last period, I have my hands full, that's for sure. They're so mischievous in class as it is right now, I can just imagine what would happen if they acted up in a test. Things might go wrong. I might not be able to handle them."

Mary, the head, agrees that she has the same concern, but now — less the resident skeptic than earlier — Mary suggests that, "Maybe all we have to do in that case is buzz down to the office and they'll send someone up to the classroom. Or maybe the kid who is misbehaving can be sent down to Sam."

lowing morning that he or she had to cover a class. Teachers also sometimes left insufficient work for their classes, and more than once the cry was heard, "What was I suppose to do for the last 30 minutes?" In emergencies, Gary and the librarian helped out by taking classes.

In April, as the on-call policy neared the end of year one, Gary asked for volunteers to sit on a policy-review committee that he would chair. "Your role," he told the four teachers who showed up, "is to give me ideas. The ultimate decision will rest with Doug and me." To that, the math teacher jibed, "That's fine by us. Gary, now when things go wrong in the unfolding, we won't be blamed."

Before long, it became apparent that Gary's concerns were markedly different from the teachers'. He centred on problems of applying the policy on a day-to-day basis while the staff debated more on who was exempt from doing on-calls. A general feeling of the committee was that *everyone*, except Doug and Gary, should be scheduled into an on-call team and be assigned to study supervision. One committee member, an electronics teacher, said, "When it comes to on-calls, I sense a lot of resentment that the librarian, guidance counsellors, and special ed. teachers aren't pulling their weight."

Yet Gary remained firm (some said inflexible): "I know what their jobs are like and I can't see telling a guidance counsellor, 'You'll have to put this interview with a parent on hold and go supervise a class.' "

servable conditions, confusions were reduced, and new resources were mobilized.

So what is important to highlight in this instance of developing a workable policy? In this episode, resentment was not particularly stirred by the administrative bias of the policy or the traditional way it was created. Consultation on administrative issues and school policies was the normal leadership style of both Doug and Gary. By allowing teachers to participate in an advisory role only, Gary and Doug simply were maintaining their control over what they perceived as traditional duties of school administrators in their Board.

Rather, teachers reacted against was what they saw as inequitable treatment, claiming that any policy intended to problem-solve should apply to all. To exempt some staff from the load of responsibility was regarded as an unfair outcome. A fair *process*, where all educators would have equal say, therefore loomed as far less important than a fair *outcome*, where teachers as workers were all in the same boat.

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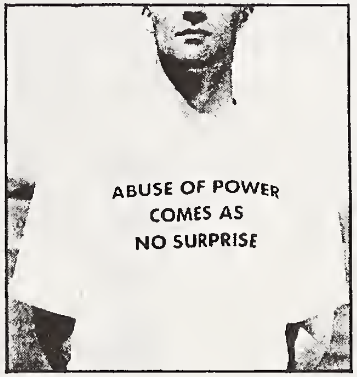


- Photo courtesy of Jenny Holzer

to announce that *he's* the one who initiated this get-together. He explains, pointing his pencil while speaking.

At Marycroft, we have a semester system in place. Exams are written by all students at the end of the semester in the gym and cafeteria. Each year, two teachers volunteer to make the exam schedule. This year Bill is one of the teachers and "Jerry," the head of the math department, the other. Bill has obtained a copy of a policy from a secondary school in another system where it's been working effectively for the past two years. All examinations are held there for all students in only four instead of seven days. Each day corresponds to a period in the daily schedule. For example, all exams on day 1 are for period 1 classes, all exams for day 2 are for period 2 classes, and so forth. All exams transpire in classrooms with the classroom teacher being the only supervisor. He says that this is a policy hope he has for us at Marycroft. He and Jerry would like all of us, as department heads, to ask our colleagues about it.

All heads, myself included, listen and show sure signs of disapproval. There are those who shake their heads, those who roll their eyes, and those who shift position in their seats. One even comes close to nodding off to a shallow sleep.

"Betty," the music head, sipping a cup of coffee, initially is the only one who seems receptive. That's because already she informally uses the same policy within her own department. For her, Bill's recommendation would mean no change. Still, as if she were considering the idea for the first time, Betty asks Bill what would happen if the teacher now — I can tell by your moans and groans. All I can say is that this approach works well elsewhere and teachers like it. I know it's a lot more work for all of you, but I think it's a better system. At least it's worth giving it our best shot. We have nothing to lose."

Principal "Sam," legs crossed, yellow legal pad and pen in his lap, is concerned about how the policy would affect his position. "How would we ever explain," he asks, "this new approach to a superintendent or to a parent whose child might complain of an unfair exam because it's different than the exam of a student in another class? Also, I think it might be unfair if one grade 9 student, for example, writes his or her exam on a Monday and another would write it on a Thursday, let's say. The second child has a longer period of time to study."

Bill, tapping his foot on the carpet, looks down at his papers and seems deflated. He sighs. Susan and Alice try to change the subject -- they each have had some cranky dealings with the woman who is the new v-p at Burton.

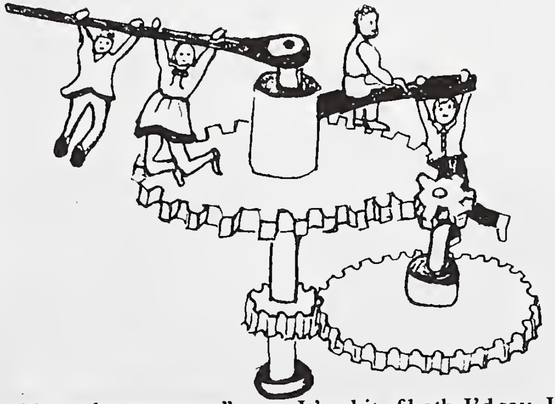
But Bill returns to the fight: "Well, Sam, you know that this is just an idea. I don't have all the answers. Just thought that it was a nifty idea and we wanted to find out what all of you thought about it. I don't think we can fully discuss all the pros and cons here. That's not the purpose of this first meeting. The purpose is...well, I think that between now and the heads' meeting on Thursday afternoon, everyone should sound out people they work with. Then we could take a vote, by department."

Bea re-weighs the evidence and concedes that the new scheduling might work after all. But now what concerns her is whether or not this approach is legal. "We had this system at the previous school that I was at, and I remember that parents complained, and the trustee and the superintendent had to get involved. Because they were getting too much flack, they had to cancel the policy. They went back to using the same system we have at Marycroft today."

"Gina," a third-year teacher and new to the school, glasses perched at the tip of her nose, offers qualified backing. "You know, this system sounds like it has a few kinks in it. Even so, I think it might be worth a go just to see how it pans out. You know, if Bill says that it's good enough for teachers at Burton, it can't be all bad, can it?"

Sandra, the beginning teacher, now with one arm on the armrest, sides with her friend Gina. "For me, it's all the same because I've never written exams before anyway. Even though I have qualms about discipline for my general-level class, I don't think that we can knock the idea without living with it first."

Gina offers an obvious escape: "If this new system really doesn't click, if parents or kids or staff don't like it, we could always go back to our old ways of doing things. It's not exactly that big a



deal. . . it's not humungous."

They concur, except for Bea who has a far-away look in her eyes. "I don't know," she muses, "I'll have to think about it. It's a lot of work and I have two kids at home. I don't know if I'm willing to do all that. Can I tell you tomorrow [Tuesday]?"

Mary says Yes, and on Thursday noon, minutes before the meeting of department heads, frumpy Bea gets back to Mary with a grudging "Let's-see-how it goes" affirmative.

Consensus Reached

Thursday afternoon at the regular department heads' meeting, Principal Sam deals just with this proposal, asking for a response from every unit. Each head says basically the same, viz., staff have questions but are willing to see if importing the idea from Burton will lead to improvements. On his yellow legal paper, Sam writes down that the vote is unanimous.

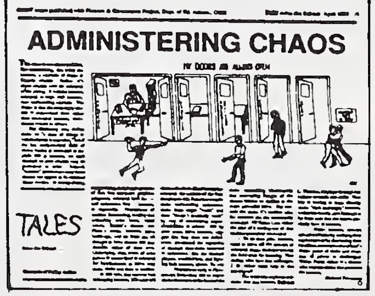
In this case, it looks as though democracy reigns in the culture of this school with respect to policy proposal and decision-making. But come on now, is this democracy or peer pressure? It's a bit of both, I'd say. It's also a spirit of adventure and innovation that sets into us troops. Somehow, some elixir prompts us to think we have the opportunity to effect genuine change, to make life better for our charges and ourselves.

By consequence, even though many caveats are manifest, everyone is more or less willing to take the plunge into this touch of change -- as long as we have the reassurance that the new function may only be temporary and that we can always blip back into our familiar routines.

So what does this sketch suggest about living with, indeed overcoming, opposition to not very radical change? Of course, many forces were at play here but one vital ingredient was that Bill had gone somewhat out of his way to find a means to improve our school. He had an inclusion-cooperative approach and he communicated with many of us fellow-administrators, face to face, as his constituency.

While communication of the focal problem was absent or swamped by Bill's presentation of just one solution, and while we initially were irked over the asymetrical awareness of what the agenda was for that Friday afternoon meeting to which we were summoned by the intercom (Bill knew, we didn't), at bottom most of us then felt we kind of owed it to him, as a friend who had helped us in the past, to at least give his suggestion a try. In my view, then, it was our organizational culture of collegiality, above all else, that led us to put aside our reservations and give our provisional assent. ❑

PRECEDING ISSUE



ADMINISTERING CHAOS

TALES

In the April 1990 issue with a theme of "Administering Chaos," we saw school settings characterized by unpredictability, random uncertainty, and general upheaval. They did not represent unique settings with exceptional problems. Instead, the tales of "chaos" and disorder depicted everyday school life. Normal patterns there were often actually series of unplanned abnormalities.

The challenges that such routine confusions presented to those who create and implement policies were complicated further by conflicting attitudes about authority, personal responsibility, discipline, and acceptable conduct. The four writers in that issue examined school policies that, although designed to curb chaos, may have in some ways fueled it. ❑

PRESENT ISSUE

CONTRARY to beliefs of many at the hierarchical peak of organizations, the most energizing goals in education are those to which school staff are truly committed, not those printed in ministry, board, or school documents.

This issue's four tales are a reminder of that and of the plurality of mind-sets on any given matter, these mind-sets varying by organizational level, position, and stakeholder. The four narratives can be interpreted as warning the would-be change agent that if loyal opposition is to be diffused, resisters' singular realities will have to be construed, developed, and consolidated.

Hence, to achieve a central purpose, policy people would do well to orient themselves to others' outlooks. At least they should make a habit of asking questions about -- and taking due account of -- unstated problems *behind* others' proposals and reactions. Thus they would profit from being more explicit in their searchings-out than Jennifer and Ottawa's copywright-anxious Minister of Communications (authorities in our first two tales) and than Gary and Bill (innovators in the last two stories). One **summative So What**: when you solve your own problems, you have only your own resources to do so. But when you devise meanings that help to solve the problems of those you depend upon, you will not be alone in adapting your organization to policy circumstances. ❑

NEXT ISSUE

AMONG nations in the West, Canada was comparatively late in starting to specially educate kids with physical, behavioural, communicational, intellectual, and multiple exceptionalities -- as long ago as 1859, Prussia's Saxony instituted such classes, and even the "materialist" U.S. installed a mandatory program ahead of its northern neighbor.

Today, with increasing numbers of children being identified as having special needs, it is time to raise critical questions about our schools' state of preparedness for providing the exceptional child with a non-threatening environment. In the December, 1990 issue, four special educators will react to aspects of the delivery system of which they are a part.

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Restoration of the Good Name

THE CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF SPECIAL ED. TEACHERS

Judit Kenyeres

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Snakes are mysterious and often beautiful creatures. Yet their reputation precedes them, thereby fuelling our fear-ridden notions about them. Fear and ignorance also help to foster hurtful rumours about beings who are human and particularly vulnerable — children.

Rumours of the most dangerous kind are often manufactured and distributed within school staff rooms. And it is difficult to escape the power of ill-willed gossip, whether one is the victim or the victimizer. Rumours shape reputations and therefore, also, outcomes. Based on hearsay, expectations are formed, which in turn become prophecies of the most *un*-fulfilling kind.

Disruptive school children are the first to acquire reputations as "troublemakers," "rebel rousers," "mean-spirited manipulators," "deviants" and/or "pre-delinquent n'er-do-wells." As fast as rumours spread of their ill repute, so do teachers' expectations of these children wither and die.

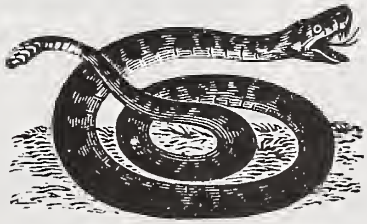
As a Special Education teacher of emotionally disturbed children, of more than ten years service, I had come to understand my main objective as that of Restoring Faith. I strongly believe that in order to restore children's faith in themselves one must also work at restoring others' faith in them. One can't be accomplished without the other. Unfortunately, the rebuilding of others' trust and confidence in these children is often overlooked in the educational literature.

Special classes are all too often isolated from the rest of the school community — both physically and emotionally. Positive events tend to remain within the domain of the classroom, although negative charges inevitably do leak out. It is therefore imperative that children's academic accomplishments, kind deeds, creative expressions, athletic strengths, and persistent efforts be presented for recognition.

In order to restore children's faith in themselves, one must also work at restoring others' faith in them.

The "Restoration of the Good Name" cannot proceed in isolation from the rest of the school nor in isolation from the home. Children who require special education placement have numerous strengths. In order to counteract their legacy of failure, their strengths must be revealed and thrust upon the world outside of the special classrooms.

I, for one, could often be found bragging in the staff room, carrying around pieces of art work, math work, essays, poems — brandishing my wares — selling, always selling my children's good name. I needed, among my colleagues, to build hopes, dash pessimism, break down prejudice, and open eyes and ears to happier sights and sounds. What I sought for my children was a chance, an opportunity to be reinstated. At times I and they were rewarded by integration into regular classes or into school athletic teams.



Unfortunately, however, there are many obstacles to the restoration plan. Many schools do not create enough opportunities for *any* of their students to shine in the collective eye. There are not enough school assemblies where children can be honoured, or presentations for parents in such forms as drama or choir, bands, art exhibits, or public speaking contests. The school as a whole, whether elementary or secondary, no longer takes the time to build a sense of identity in the community.

Children in general do not have enough access to each other's talents, to each other's struggles and accomplishments. This is of utmost importance to all children, and especially for children with special needs. Teachers of special children need *more* space, *more* time, *more* occasions to demonstrate their young ones' efforts and hard-fought achievements. They need to make a direct impact on the collective consciousness of teachers and parents regarding the progress of their students.

On wilderness treks to build strength and confidence, my students and I caught many sights, smells, colds, *and* snakes. I watched the children's sense of courage build and enjoyed their pleasure in using the unfounded fears of others to their own advantage. We entered many regular classes after such treks, showing off our prizes — green vipers dangling from our hands as teachers and students alike looked on aghast. In these episodes reputations are salvaged. The Good Name of the snake and of the children is for a short while restored. But it is the cumulative effect of many such "short whiles" that is of essence when the Restoration of Faith is the objective.

Tradition and Reform

SOME THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION IN GERMANY

Norman Diffey

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In November 1989, courtesy of the West German Goethe Institute, I joined a group of educators from 19 different countries on a two-week pedagogical tour of the Federal Republic. We visited schools in the Lands of Hessen and Nordrhein-Westfalen, selected as examples of pedagogical reform, the tour's official theme. There were ample opportunities to meet teachers and school leaders, and to hear talks from such notable authorities as Ludwig von Friedeburg, a former education minister and author of a book on school reform in Germany. We gained insight into the historical and modern context of some issues facing German education. These then offered a broader perspective from which to view our own systems.

Tradition decrees the separation of most German children after only four years of elementary school (*Grundschule*) into three distinct "paths," or "vertical columns," based on a prognosis of their future function in society: academic (*Gymnasium*), middle management and technology (*Realschule*), skilled or manual work (*Hauptschule*). This early selection makes it difficult to switch paths later, and it has been shown to penalize not only late developers but especially working-class children. One reason for its continuance is the preservation of *Allgemeinbildung*, meaning "general education" in terms of a cultural and intellectual heritage traditionally entrusted to an elite which perpetuates itself from one generation to the next. Maintaining a sharp distinction between this and education for the workplace (*Berufsbildung*) is becoming increasingly difficult in a world which expects its leaders to display some degree of sophistication in matters of technology or economics.

In Germany these are political, not pedagogical, matters. Politicians disagree profoundly on the relationship between individual needs and those of society. (In German there are *two* words for need: *Bedürfnis* is a need subjectively felt by the individual, whereas *Bedarf* is one that can be demonstrated objectively.) In educational contexts we often refer to student needs without bothering to distinguish personal ones — often little more than tastes and interests — from those related to the student's future role in society. In Germany, the 1960s in particular witnessed attempts at educational reform to ensure equality of opportunity for each child. It was spearheaded by the Social Democrats and implemented in Lands they controlled. The conservative Christian Democrats have tended to resist or reverse such changes, seeing them as a threat to the existing order. Education has thus become embroiled with party politics to an extent unknown in Canada, even though both countries have similar federal systems. Some Lands have even threatened non-recognition of the diplomas issued by Lands of different political stripes. Perhaps in Canada the relatively independent nature of the school boards helps prevent this kind of situation. Issues tend to be looked at on their merits, with the welfare of the student uppermost in our minds, even though we may not always serve this ideal in practice.

Schiller School in Offenbach, Germany.

Students take responsibility for the upkeep of their classrooms.

In such a setting vandalism or graffiti would be unthinkable.

Germany's reforms of the 1960s seem to have run out of steam. One of their major achievements was the creation of the *Gesamtschulen*, or "together schools," which combine the three paths in one building. Yet here again they are divided between those that permit mixing for some subjects and the more conservative ones that maintain strict segregation. In Hessen these schools send 30 percent of their graduates to the upper level *Gymnasium*, with the chance of attending university, whereas this is true of only 8 percent of the general population. Despite their success, they still constitute only a small percentage of the total number of secondary schools in that state. Coming from the background of the North American high school, I found the atmosphere of the *Gesamtschulen* much more congenial and familiar, less tense than that of the *Gymnasium*. Yet most Germans seem to regard them as alien.

School and Society

Tradition is also responsible for the widely acknowledged fact that most German children spend too long in school. Regardless of their path, there is universal education from kindergarten to upper secondary, from age three to eighteen or nineteen. Professionals often do not complete their education until the age of 30. Diplomas and titles seem to be part of the German way. A vocational school we visited listed "gas pump attendant" as a certifiable program of instruction. One outcome of the length of schooling is the current concern as to whether generations of adolescents are growing up in ignorance of the world of work, community, and politics. To counteract this, experiments are in progress to involve them in various community projects designed to heighten their social consciousness and to supply them with practical work skills. *Praktisches Lernen* is the name given to this kind of outward-oriented education.

Another tradition works against the establishment of the kind of school spirit we take for granted in North America. German schools have always been half-day schools, attended six mornings a week. There is little room for extra-curricular activities. One of the wealthiest countries in the world persists in the view that it cannot afford to provide full-day facilities. The need to transform the schools into social and socializing institutions instead of mere purveyors of knowledge and skills is receiving increasing attention.

We certainly have a lot to learn from Germany's vocational schools. They are well endowed technologically, mainly because industry works hand in hand with the education system through a partnership known as the dual system. This is something like co-operative education with the difference that it is the norm for any apprentice learning a trade. Typically an apprentice attends school for half the day and works for the other. Employers now insist that the school curriculum equip tomorrow's workers with personal resources not needed in the past. In addition to job-specific skills, they are increasingly expected to be able to perform tasks right from planning through to implementation and evaluation, with little supervision.

Schiller School

Asked to select the impression likely to remain with me the longest, I would probably give that distinction to a certain integrated *Gesamtschule* in the Frankfurt suburb of Offenbach. Schiller School on Goethe Street recalls Germany's most famous luminaries but is unprepossessing from the outside. Internally it is made up of many "little schools," each consisting of three classes taught exclusively by a team of three teachers. Physically the schools are separated from each other by locked doors. (German school principals are instantly identifiable by their massive key-rings, just as ours are by their suits.) Unlocking such a door, our young guide admitted us to a realm for which we were quite unprepared: a suite of tastefully decorated rooms, immaculate contemporary furniture, large potted palms in the hall, a well-equipped kitchen, and a washroom more luxurious than those of many homes. The teachers' room was an inviting drop-in lounge.

Our party was asked to join some students and teachers in a room one hesitated to call a classroom. Quickly and efficiently an excellent three-course meal was delivered from the kitchen and expertly served. Such meals are planned, prepared, and fast-frozen, in accordance with sound management and catering practices, for any students who sign up to eat before going home. As we ate, our Grade 10 hosts told us of the many Saturdays spent in renovating their part of the school, a process involving more than the wielding of paint brushes. Minute planning, research in interior design, evaluation and choice of building materials, were all part of the co-operative enterprise. The students still assumed the responsibility for regular cleaning and maintenance. In return for the saving in janitorial costs, the authorities supplied them with top quality carpeting. In such a setting, vandalism or graffiti would be unthinkable. It was hard to imagine voices raised in anger. Teachers and students were an intimate community, secure in a comfortable setting that many of the students lacked at home. Our 17-year-old guide, who spoke impeccable German, was a recent immigrant from South America.

For all their egalitarian principles, our high schools can easily become depersonalizing factories. The school on Goethe Street offers an intriguing way of building mutual trust through pride of ownership.

ORBIT SPECIAL ISSUES

DECEMBER 1990 **Whole Language and Spelling**

Guest Editor
Ruth Scott

Perspectives from Teachers, Parents, Researchers, and Administrators

FEBRUARY 1991 **Induction Programs**
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Guest Editors
Ardra Cole and Nancy Watson

Perspectives from the Ministry of Education, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, Faculties of Education, and School Boards

Funding Private Schools

PART THREE OF
A THREE PART SERIES

The Revolution in Ontario School Finances

Stephen B. Lawton

Professor, Department of Educational Administration, OISE

What might happen *if* the province of Ontario extended direct funding to private schools? Would public education be destroyed, would it remain unaffected, or would it adapt as it learned to compete with other schools? There is no definitive answer to this question, but experiences elsewhere suggest what changes might occur.

I would emphasize, first, that the current policy is one of providing no *direct* aid to private schools. In fact, government — local, provincial, and federal — already provides considerable *indirect* assistance to private schools in Ontario. In a research study I carried out for the Shapiro Commission (The Commission on Private Schools in Ontario), I estimated that at least one-sixth of the cost of private schools in Ontario is provided by *indirect* government subsidies (Lawton, 1985). These are in the form of tax deductions for those who give charitable donations to private schools, tax deductions for tuition for religious instruction, property tax exemptions to non-profit private schools, and tax avoidance through the formation of trust funds for children (a loophole recently abolished). Shapiro thought my estimate conservative, and suggested in some cases at least one-third of the cost was met through such subsidies (*The Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario,* 1985, p. 36).

Since most of the indirect assistance (referred to in the literature as "tax expenditures") is based on traditions in English Common Law for assisting charitable institutions, it tends not to be controversial and is often overlooked. Certainly private school interests are not about to draw attention to it.

The concept of direct aid in the form of grants or services is controversial, however. In general, it is feared that support of private schools will deprive publicly operated schools of funding, result in a transfer of students to the private sector, and weaken the ability of society to provide an egalitarian educational system. That is, funding private schools is seen to increase the opportunity for social elites to maintain an advantage for their children by securing superior, exclusive educational advantages for their offspring. This suggestion is more than a theory; early appraisals of the Thatcher government's "assisted pupils plan," which provides grants for high achieving students in government operated schools to transfer to elite private schools, shows that most of the beneficiaries are from middle class or better backgrounds (Edwards, Fitz, & Whitty, 1986).

> *The days of an educational system based upon Henry Ford's motto about the Model T — "They can have any colour, so long as it's black" are over.*

To assess what the effects of direct aid to private schools in Ontario might be, one can look at England, as suggested above, or at the five Canadian provinces (British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Quebec) that already provide some level of direct assistance to private schools. Ontario, it is true, does have a few minor programs assisting private schools, such as the provision of curriculum guidelines and inspection for the purposes of granting high school diplomas, but taken together they amount to very little, less than $1,000,000 (Lawton, 1985, p. 176).

Assessment of the impact of funding private schools in these other provinces generally shows a relatively modest effect on enrolment in publicly operated schools, at least in the short run (Perras, 1985). Indeed, private school enrolments have been increasing as quickly in Ontario as in a number of these provinces. What I find interesting is who does and who does not seem to benefit from such funding, which generally takes the form of per pupil grants to the schools in question.

Most private schools are operated by religious bodies, for it is religious groups that have the entrepreneurial resources necessary to organize parents and provide a site for schools. However, not all religious groups seem to benefit equally. In British Columbia, where there are no government funded Roman Catholic separate schools, it is the private Roman Catholic schools that have benefited most. In Saskatchewan, which has government supported Catholic and non-Catholic public schools, private Lutheran schools have profited. In Quebec, Jewish and Greek Orthodox communities have founded new schools that receive government funding. Generally, though, evangelical Christian schools seem to be left out, apparently due to ideological reasons that make them unwilling to comply with the government regulations that accompany funding (such as curriculum standards, qualifications of teachers, and the like). A significant number of such schools have been founded on the principle of the separation of church and state, with education seen as a religious rather than secular concern.

An extreme form of regulation as a condition for funding is seen in the Shapiro Commission's recommendation for the creation of a new type of school. an “associated school,” which would see a private school affiliate with a public or separate school board to receive funding. An associated school might retain a distinctive religious character, but would have to practise open enrolment, hire certificated teachers, and not charge tuition in return for funding and assistance (*The Report of the Commission on Private Schools in Ontario,* Recommendation 21, p. 53). An experimental agreement the Lincoln County Board of Education has signed with a private Christian high school appears quite similar to the arrangements Shapiro advocated.

Alberta has had legislation permitting associated schools for a number of years. I know of no systematic assessment of the legislation’s effects, but the case of the Logos Christian School in Calgary gained considerable publicity. First associated with the public board there, the Logos school was the target of a slate of school trustees who ran and were elected on a platform of ending all such associations as inappropriate (and in fact discriminatory) in a public system. That Logos was perhaps too popular and was drawing students from neighbourhood schools already beset with enrolment declines no doubt intensified the community’s concerns (Nelson, 1982). In any case, both Logos and two Jewish schools which had been associated with the public board are now associated with the Calgary Roman Catholic Separate School Board, although this arrangement may be threatened by Alberta’s new education act, which would not allow non-Catholics to direct their taxes to the Catholic board.

Evidence of the types of religious problems raised by such schemes linking private religious schools to a non-denominational public school system is also provided by England, where the category of “voluntary aided schools” is similar to that of “associated schools.” In London, a recent controversy involved the creation of a Moslem Koranic school. At the same time, assessment of the effects of existing voluntary aided schools, which are primarily Roman Catholic or Anglican but include a few Methodist or Jewish schools, suggest that while they are not as socially select as the elite private schools (referred to as “public” schools), they do retain a significant degree of selectivity (Parry, 1971). A similar story is told in New Zealand, where “integrated” schools came into being about a decade ago, under similar terms (Library of the Parliament of Victoria, 1984).

What, then, would be the impact of providing grants to private schools in Ontario, creating a new category of “associated schools” or copying England’s “assisted pupil” scheme?

In the short term, say five years, I doubt very much that there would be any effect. In the long term, though, I don’t think there is any doubt that any one of these schemes would create a greater degree of religious and social separation in education. Some of this would occur within the public system where alternative religious schools would develop. It is perhaps notable that Quebec now has enacted a freeze on the funding of any new private schools, as has Australia, which began major funding of private schools about a decade ago (Hogan, 1984).

It is quite clear that any “community” that has the entrepreneurial talent to organize its own schools would probably do so, and that those that already have such schools would expand and improve them. For the most part, the communities concerned would be religious communities. Communities defined primarily by ethnicity (with the possible exception of Native peoples) would find the task more difficult due to both human rights legislation and the lack of a consistent ideological basis to plan a school or educational system.

While we might decry increased fragmentation, I would emphasize one point. The days of an educational system based upon Henry Ford’s motto about the Model T — “They can have any colour, so long as it’s black” — are over. It is necessary for school boards to engage in some degree of market segmentation and product differentiation, to use the language of commerce. Funding private schools, in whatever form, tends to abandon the political and social process of deciding what type of schooling should be offered and lets the “free market” decide. To me, abandoning the forum that school boards offer for debating our social purposes and future is not wise.

Part One in this series “Who’s Running the Shop?” appeared in the Oct. ’89 issue of *Orbit.* Part Two, “Taxation of Corporate Assessment, appeared in the Feb. ’90 issue of *Orbit* (back issues available at $4.50 each).

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Tax on Books Is an Attack on Canada's Identity

ANTICIPATING THE EFFECTS OF THE GST

Eric Balkind

Freelance Writer (and Former Principal), Milton, Ontario

Politicians often fuss over what they see as the close relationship which exists between Canada and the United States, and it is certainly true that the two countries have enjoyed a long period of relatively friendly co-existence. However, the fact that the USA is so close has resulted in an ongoing struggle by generations of Canadian school teachers to help children to know that they are indeed Canadians. Consider just a few of the confusing facts with which the students must deal:

- Many children actually spend more hours watching TV than they do in school and most of the programs they see are American; once you add in those ubiquitous commercials it is difficult for anyone to know just what is Canadian. Should it surprise us if our kids believe that Wonder Woman lives in Toronto or that Dallas is somewhere west of Winnipeg?
- The National Hockey League consists of five Canadian teams together with eleven American, and baseball is even more extreme with just two Canadian teams out of twenty-five. No wonder youngsters sometimes ask what the word "national" means. Could you explain just what's national about the NHL or the National League?
- Youngsters love comic books and there are enormous numbers of them on the market, most featuring that well-known flag made up of stars and stripes. As a result, just about every Canadian kid who identifies with a superhero is identifying with America.
- At a more local level, when Ontario politicians negotiated the building of Canada's Wonderland they not only let an American company build it; they also allowed them to identify the place with a well-known cartoon character — good old Yogi Bear. I myself confess to having trouble seeing what's Canadian about that particular bear; even his accent sounds funny.

> *The effect on our schools will be a significant loss in buying power which will translate directly into fewer texts.*

The list goes on and the difficult question from a child's point of view is: How do you tell who you are? If you doubt that this confusion of identity exists, just ask around and you'll find that there are more than enough adults who think that we have a president and that the White House is in Ottawa. I kid you not.

Despite this enormous influence on our way of life we have been fortunate to witness the growth of one cultural element which has steadfastly struggled to develop and maintain a unique identity. What a pleasure it has been to watch the emergence, against all odds, of some very remarkable writers and poets — Margaret Atwood, Earle Birney, Margaret Laurence, W. O. Mitchell, Pierre Berton, and, indeed, many others.

But the continued development of the special and genuinely Canadian milieu created by such artists is threatened by the thoughtless decision of our own federal government to slap a 7 percent GST (effective January/91) on all print materials. According to the "Don't Tax Reading Coalition," the imposition of this tax could result in a 20 percent drop in the sales of Canadian publications; the direct consequence would be a lesser variety and selection of Canadian books and magazines available in bookshops, newsstands, and libraries across the country.

The effect on our schools will be a significant loss in buying power which will translate directly into fewer texts, library books, and reference magazines for students. Example: in one fair-sized school system in Ontario, principals estimate that for every 500 pupils there will be about 90 fewer books per year; 90 books means up to four class sets of novels, math texts or whatever. Given the current student population in Ontario (approximately 1,830,000 from kindergarten through Grade 13), this means that in 1991 there will be up to 300,000 fewer books to go round. At these rates, how many books will be lost to our children "from sea to shining sea?" How many Canadian publishers could go out of business?

Although Canada is one of the more literate nations in the world there are still many thousands of Canadians who cannot read or write at even basic levels of competence. Ottawa is already spending millions of tax dollars in the attempt to help these folk because illiteracy in the workplace costs dearly in terms of inferior or even lost production. A new 7 percent tax on books and magazines which are already high-priced will surely discourage such poor readers from buying reading materials in order to hone their new skills.

Taxing a resource which has long been recognized as the essential key to the establishment of a Canadian identity boggles the mind; taxing literacy is an additional lunacy.

Some Reflections on OSIS:

ELIMINATING DOUBLESPEAK

Michael Loebel

Special Education Teacher, Lanark County Board of Education

The Ontario Ministry of Education document known as OSIS has ambiguous, if not contradictory objectives. According to the OSIS document, "the program in the publicly supported educational system should be designed to provide the greatest possible opportunity for every student to develop as completely as possible his/her abilities and interests and to meet each student's special needs." To develop someone's potential means to help him or her develop "as an individual and as a contributing, responsible member of society who will think clearly, feel deeply, and act wisely." This will be achieved "when the school facilitates the intellectual, physical, social, cultural, emotional, and moral growth of each student and develops more fully the knowledge, skills, and aptitudes that each student brings to the school."

Concern is expressed that schools should help to prepare "adolescents both to develop the independence they need to act as concerned and compassionate citizens and to continue on to post-secondary studies wherever they have the interest and capability to do so."

The final point which the introductory section makes is that "students should participate in the decision-making process as they form personal educational goals, select courses, and plan for the best use of their time." Also, it is significant to note that "as the student proceeds towards the Senior Division, the emphasis will gradually shift towards *preparation* for citizenship, employment, or further study." These are the basic concerns and goals which are elaborated upon in the rest of the OSIS document.

OSIS emphasizes that students are to become fully functioning, responsible members of society. Rather than requiring independence to achieve this goal, one might well consider conformity and acceptance as being more suitable attitudes. After all, reforms and challenges to society usually come from people who are able to think critically and maintain an independent stance in spite of society's pressure to mute this type of behaviour. If we are to take OSIS seriously then a plausible case could be made that it advocates, on the one hand, that teachers lay the intellectual foundations required for future reformers, while on the other hand, it advocates conformity and functionalism as the basis for maintaining and perpetuating the status quo. This fundamental ambiguity is not helpful.

This highlights a major difficulty with OSIS, namely one of internal consistency. It talks of allowing for full personal development but proceeds to institute various mechanisms and classification procedures which hinder, if not negate, this process. One example is streaming secondary students into basic, general, and advanced levels. Once the student has been classified into one of these realms, his or her future is determined. The system does not seem to push students upwards. It is rather more like a series of nets that catch students as they fall from the top and students are generally allowed to fall to their lowest level. This is the direct opposite of what OSIS seems to want.

OSIS mandates streaming and hides its true impact by speaking of developing, for instance, citizenship at the basic level. A cynic might make reference to Orwellian language at this point. It seems that only the students who qualify for the advanced stream have any opportunity to develop more than basic survival skills. OSIS should come clean on this point and state clearly that only some students are to receive the kind of education OSIS suggests as being desirable. This pretence of universality should be eliminated to maintain the credibility of the document.

Given the nature of streaming and its impact, how can we take seriously the suggestion that students be involved in the decision-making process, particularly concerning their studies? Are students really in a position to make such decisions without help from educators, counsellors, and parents? We must remain cognizant of the influence that such people exert on students. OSIS appears to be in the untenable position of maintaining that some students are not capable of any substantive intellectual achievement, yet are to be encouraged to make major educational decisions.

Further, if students are to make so many decisions for themselves, then why does OSIS insist on a particular curriculum? If students really are to have a meaningful voice in their education, then they should also be able to determine curriculum in order to ensure that it meets their needs and fits their criteria of relevance. What OSIS is really saying to students is that they can have some choice, but the Ministry will limit the range of the choice. Limitations are acceptable. Clearly there is no such thing as absolute and unfettered freedom, but again, OSIS should acknowledge these boundaries.

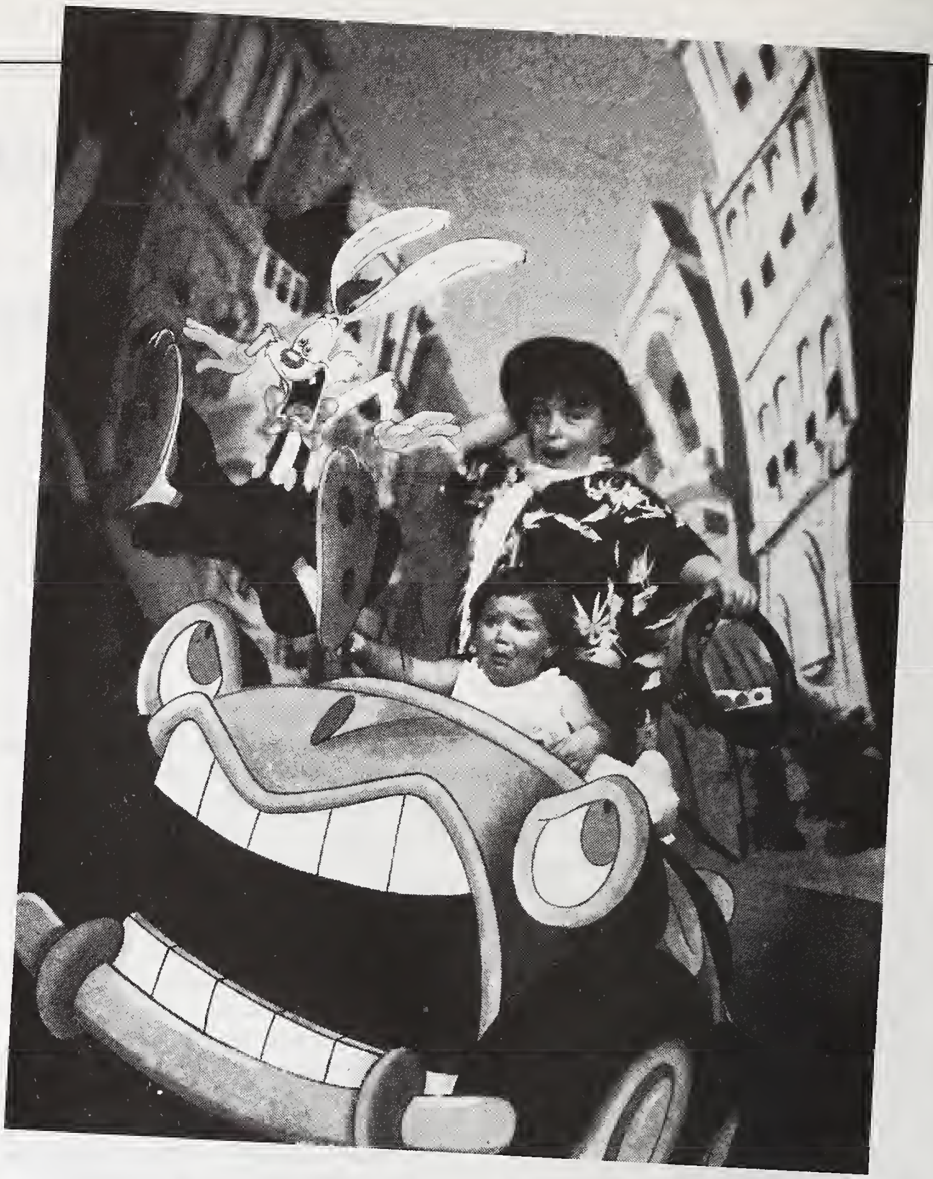
One may well question if students really do have all that much choice. If one wants to be a lawyer, the course of study is prescribed. It is not acceptable to speak of meaningful decision making and making choices at all. Despite the language used, the underlying assumption appears to be that the writers of the document know what is best for the students. This is not necessarily an unacceptable position, but one which is not clearly stated.

OSIS is a very flawed document, principally because of the ambiguities and contradictions surrounding its aims and objectives. If schools are to teach independence and critical thinking and allow students to determine their own future, then streaming and a centralized curriculum design should be dropped. However, if we wish to maintain the system that is now in place, then we should do so in an honest and forthright manner. Elimination of the Orwellian doublespeak would be most welcome.

Mass Media in a Time of Crisis

Rose Dyson

Chair, Canadian Coalition on Violent Entertainment



It is time for educators to pay greater attention to the revolutionary changes in our world brought on by the mass media. While fostering many positive attitudes towards peace and sensitivity to the natural environment, the mass media in western societies has also moved towards greater exploitation of its audience and the production of more disinformation. This is particularly evident in aggressive advertising which displays ever increasing levels of violence.

Despite sporadic media reports on teenage violence and vandalism, there is seldom any mention of the influence of the recent trend towards ''action-filled'' entertainment. We now have weekly horror shows like ''Freddy's Nightmares'' and interactive television programming such as the ''Captain Power Series'' developed by Mattel Toys and put on the market in 1987. Participation on the part of the child requires the purchase of a toy machine gun that sells in Canada for about $40. According to Brandon Centerwall of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Washington School of Medicine, as many as half of all violent crimes, including rape and assault, are related to the impact of television violence on American and Canadian society.

If one assumes, as I do, that television is probably the most powerful educational force for inculcating ideas ever invented, and if one reflects on Nielson Rating Company reports which indicate that the average 18 year old, upon graduation from high school, will have watched approximately 12,000 hours of television as opposed to having spent 6,000 hours in the classroom, then one realizes a significant portion of media profits are based on ideological child abuse.

Two major trends in the communications sector of the economy are crucial in understanding the context of contemporary media.The first is ''deregulation'' or ''liberalization'' which, translated, means the disregard of any vestige of social responsibility and accountability in private enterprise, freeing it from even the most modest checks to do as it pleases under the guise of progress and legitimate freedom of expression. The other trend is public broadcasting, which for all its flaws, embraces the principle that there should be accountability somewhere.

The average 18-year-old will have watched approximately 12,000 hours of television as opposed to having spent 6,000 hours in the classroom.

However, throughout North America, there is an increasing weakening of state systems in favour of private enterprise and media giants. Deregulation of children's television programming, begun by President Regan in 1982, for example, has led to a scenario where many half-hour children's television programs in the United States are essentially advertisements for T-shirts and toys, and are often paid for by toy manufacturers.

The global media system is characterized by a growing trend towards mergers and conglomeratization. Time Inc. and Warner Communication who merged in the spring of 1989 now represent over $18,000,000,000. At the time of their merger, Time and Warner predicted that in five to ten years the western world would be dominated by only a handful of media conglomerates and that they intended to be one of them.

According to a speech given by Herbert Schiller of the Department of Communications, University of California, ''great force and acceleration gather in the power of new technologies, which along with film, radio, television, press and recording techniques now include video, satellite communications, computers and cable systems. Within this vast array of technology we are receiving more and more products turned out by only a few members in large scale enterprises."

In addressing the impact of certain aspects of the media we must start looking at the interconnectedness of the entire field. To begin with, the aim to enhance profits means that movies turn into videocassettes, then toys reflecting characters on these screens, T-shirts, then theme parks. Any one of these developments in themselves sounds reasonably harmless but looked at as a whole they begin to offer a picture of the human forces of diversity and imagination being sealed off. "When one watches children's television in the United States," says Schiller, "with a few laudable exceptions, one is watching the debasement of the young generation, young minds being directed toward consumerism, acquisition, life comprised basically of material possession and nagging their parents until a particular product is purchased. The main messages going out are that consumerism is desirable and essentially the definition of democracy based on infinite choice." At the same time, there is a growing emphasis that "might is right" and that violence is the key to conflict resolution. Clearly these values are at odds with those necessary for planetary survival.

What are the alternatives? We have to rethink what is to be afforded the fullest amount of free speech and circulation of ideas. Corporate speech cannot be granted unrestrained expression. Corporate speech is advertising. Its justification has been legitimized throughout the educational system, which has led to a grievous misreading and distortion of what constitutes freedom of speech. Similarly, if reform movements are to deal with the fundamental consciousness-forming materials of the mass media, then they have to take up the questions of cultural pollution and who has the right to transmit these materials.

In addition, there is the need for ecologically oriented groups to demand access to new information technologies, particularly through community cable television. Only when we realize that the cultural sphere has become one of the most dominant centres of the existing economic order and that it requires input from all of us, especially at the grass roots level, will we be on our way to real change.

NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

For the past few months a small group of Board members, faculty, and staff have been planning the development of the OISE Foundation for Learning. The group is chaired by Mae Waese, Chair of the Metropolitan Toronto School Board and a member of the OISE Board, and includes John Flynn and Stan Reid, both former Chairs of the OISE Board of Governors, the former also being an OISE alumnus.

We need to attract to the Foundation Board a number of prominent people in the world of business, industry, and finance who have an interest in the future of education in Ontario. The Foundation Board will then assist in identifying sources of support for new initiatives and to better fund continuing programs, and thereby make it possible for OISE to fulfil its mandate — a possibility at present far beyond its present resources.

Over several months, meetings have been held with various departments and other units in the Institute to discuss their needs and a number of priorities have been established. The support of OISE's Jackson Library and OISE's educational research and development efforts are objectives that will involve every member of the community.

Other priority areas are the strengthening of the Centre for Women's Studies in Education, the expansion of our work in language learning and multicultural studies, and, for course, support for our students who in many cases forego regular income yet must find the resources to live in one of the world's most expensive cities.

The needs for environmental education and continuing education, particularly in the world of business and industry, have received extraordinary emphasis in the eyes of the public. OISE must assume leadership in these areas as Ontario seeks to defend the environment while competing in the new global economy.

Now the Institute must ask for the co-operation of every member of the community: students, faculty, staff, and alumni. Each one of us has some contact with people who participate in the marketplace and who can assist the Institute in reaching out to corporations and foundations.

We know that it will be difficult to attract resources to a graduate school specializing in education and considered by the general public to be the recipient of generous government financing. Nonetheless, the need to search out private funds for purposes crucial to our community's health and development forces us to attempt to overcome these existing barriers.

We do need the help of every person who has been associated with OISE over the past quarter of a century.

To offer your help call the Director or Graham Scott who is co-ordinating the activities of the OISE Foundation for Learning.

Walter

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PART THREE OF
A THREE PART SERIES

Is Science Happening Here?

John Mazurek
Duffering-Peel RCSS Board

Science Is Happening Here, the current elementary science policy document in Ontario, is an attempt to encourage in students both active inquiry and a solid knowledge of science content. How can we find out if it is actually working? This is third and final article in John Mazurek's look at junior division science education.

Junior Science Curriculum: Towards a Relevant Subject Context

As was stated in the first two articles of this series, the junior division stands at the point of collision between the predominant emphases of primary and intermediate level curricula. The focus of the primary division is general thinking skills. The contexts in which those thinking skills are developed are left, for the most part, to the discretion of the teacher and the learners. Their choices for problem solving may or may not involve science; science is not treated as a distinct form of knowledge with its own specialized methods of inquiry (Science Council of Canada, 1984a, pp.95-96). This approach is often defended on the grounds that young children are not yet ready to handle specialized modes of thinking. In other words, a subject orientation is seen as being beyond the developmental needs of the learners. On the other hand, the intermediate division does distinguish between various kinds of knowledge. It believes that students should be introduced to the framework of concepts and skills which make problem solving in the sciences somewhat unique from other ways of thinking.

In 1967, the Ministry released two curriculum statements for the primary and junior divisions, *Education in the Primary and Junior Divisions (EPJD)* and *The Formative Years.* For almost two decades these documents served as the only official guidelines for classroom practice up to Grade 6. Though they were intended to be complementary, the two publications suggest differing notions of how science should be approached at the junior level — differences which reflect the primary/intermediate dichotomy mentioned above.

EPJD leans towards the inquiry/developmental orientation to curriculum described in the first article of this series. It speaks generally of encouraging thinking skills, problem-solving attitudes, and democratic values, but these educational goals are not organized in relation to particular subjects or disciplines and they are not precisely defined in terms of behavioural outcomes. Instead, learning is related to organic tasks which integrate "patterns of knowledge," i.e., which combine aspects of Communication, The Arts, and Environmental Studies. Science learning seems to be part of Environmental Studies, although only one of five learning aims for that section directly mentions science, and even that statement is somewhat vague (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1975a, p.93).

No distinction is made between science curriculum at the primary and junior levels.

The Formative Years follows the subject/discipline orientation described in the second article of this series. There are lists of intended learner outcomes, organized according to specific subjects, including science. In this way, the need to develop thinking skills in relation to various contexts of knowledge (visual arts, mathematics, literature, etc.) is implicitly recognized. The list of science objectives in *The Formative Years,* although as brief as the one in *EPJD*, is at least specifically related to essential concepts of the field.

In the areas of mathematics and communication (reading, writing, speaking and listening), the document provides detailed lists of intended learning outcomes, with separate items for primary and junior students. Science, however, is less precisely defined; like *EPJD*, the primary and junior objectives for that subject are lumped together. It is as if no advancement is expected over a six year period in the learner's understanding of scientific concepts and skills.

The Science Council of Canada report of 1983 gave the impression that both primary and junior teachers had adopted the integrative, informal approach suggested by *EPJD* (Science Council of Canada, 1984a, p.96). However, a 1985 provincial review of junior education, *A Look at Forty-Two Schools,* noted that, in what it called Environmental Studies (read: science and geography), "... the development of process skills and cognitive skills was given little emphasis.... Most Junior Division children ... were not given time to test and investigate ideas first-hand using suitable learning resources. The tendency to obtain information mainly from secondary sources was observed. Movement from inquiry to theory was often too rapid" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1985b, p.12).

In response to the findings of this study, the Ministry issued a publication specifically for junior division teachers in the following year. This resource book, entitled *Ages 9 Through 12,* was designed to help alleviate the excessive reliance on didactic teaching practices that had been observed. It promoted the use of more active and integrated learning strategies in the classroom. Unfortunately, the general social, emotional and intellectual student behaviours to be advanced by such an approach were not precisely defined. As educational theorist Ralph Tyler once pointed out (notwithstanding his own enthusiasm for the active role of the student in the learning process), there can be no valid assessment of such a program without a list of intended learning outcomes (Tyler, 1949, p. 111; 1976, p. 37). Furthermore, Ages *9 Through 12* said nothing about how active learning could be related to specific subject/discipline areas like science.

Later in 1986, the Ministry issued *Science in the Primary and Junior Divisions, A Statement of Direction,* which did address some of these concerns. Perhaps its most significant contribution was to reiterate the obvious: "that process and content always come inextricably bound together, both in science and in education" and to think through some of the implications that this presents for science curriculum — at the junior level and at *all* other levels as well (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 6).

One implication drawn out in this document is that "active learning" and the acquisition of inquiry skills are not, in themselves, identical with "doing science." As we saw in the first article of this series, "real" scientists have to work from a framework of what is already known (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1986, p. 6). The Ministry statement concludes that, at school, direct teaching is required to build this foundation. Children will not likely "discover" such concepts from their own exploratory activities.

A second implication developed in the document is the necessary linkage of the scientific knowledge framework with the everyday lives and interests of the learners. The direct teaching of certain science concepts can be, as we have seen in our look at the intermediate division, an irrelevant or meaningless exercise for students. However, if those concepts are introduced through learning opportunities from the immediate environment, students can understand that science is all around them, that it is an integral part of their world.

A third implication cited is that the cognitive development of the learners, in part, dictates the extent to which science concepts can be introduced. Primary level children and junior level children perceive the world around them in different ways, so what they are capable of learning about science is different (1986, p. 7). This is a distinction not made in either *The Formative Years* or *EPJD*. In general, junior learners can see relevance in and connections between a wider variety of personal observations and experiences than primary students. However, concepts which can only be related to observations and connections made by others, or which depend on "formal modelling" remain too abstract for the junior age group. This notion is corroborated by the research of Shayer and Adey (1981).

The reconsiderations offered by *Science in Primary and Junior Education, A Statement of Direction* were incorporated in the 1988 document, *Science Is Happening Here*, the Ministry's first policy statement exclusively devoted to science in the primary and junior divisions. It balances a variety of requirements which makes it unique among the other Ministry documents that we've just examined.

Science Is Happening Here lists a number of skills (e.g., "predicting", "manipulating equipment and materials"), attitudes (e.g., "objectivity", "respect for living things") and knowledge areas (e.g."energy", "change", etc.) which it feels are important in scientific thinking and can be developed to some degree at the primary and junior levels. There is nothing out of the ordinary here. In fact, general listings of these sorts are supplied, to a lesser extent, in *The Formative Years*. What *is* different in this case, however, is how the items from the lists are subsequently synthesized into an extensive offering of specific learning activities.

The activities are divided into separate opportunities for primary and junior students. The junior activities are more complex and involve a wider range of experiences. They are listed in columns beside the primary activities to show how they specifically build on the latter, experientially and/or conceptually. This side-by-side format shows the continuity between the scientific opportunities of the two divisions without obfuscating the differences between them.

It may be asked whether or not the activities outlined are too prescriptive. How can *Science Is Happening Here* encourage genuine student interest in science if all of the activities are pre-programmed? Isn't this an invitation to the problems of the "transmission" approach discussed in the second article of this series?

In answer to these concerns, it must first be noted that the above activities are called "learning opportunities"; they are not intended as specific, intended learning outcomes. This means that there is room for variation in the responses of students to the activities. Previous personal experiences, class environment, board policy and a number of other factors can all affect the learning potential of an activity. These differences are respected by the design of the guideline. In fact, the contrasts are striking if we compare *Science Is Happening Here* with a junior level science curriculum which emphasizes uniform learning outcomes. In Manitoba, for example, there are separate units of study for the general topic of "Matter and Energy" in each of Grades 4, 5, and 6. The specificity of the intended outcomes demands that that topic be handled similarly in all classes of the same grade level. A Grade 6 teacher must ensure that his or her students "can operationally define a wedge," "observe that several threads can exert more force on an object than one thread", etc. In all, there are thirty-three such outcomes expected for this one topic alone over a three year period: five for Grade 4; ten for Grade 5, and eighteen for Grade 6 (Manitoba Ministry of Education, 1979, pp.151-154, 168-171, 200-204). Flexibility for learners and teachers alike is severely limited compared with guidelines set out in Science Is Happening Here.

Unlike Bruner's projects in the fifties and sixties and countless science programs from private publishers since then, this document does not presume to anticipate the exact sequence in which the activities should be carried out or the depth to which they should be explored. It recognizes that to do so would undermine their meaningfulness. Flexibility allows for variations in student interest, student interest allows for authentic problem solving, and authentic problem solving is essential for scientific thinking.

Completing the Picture: Defining Learning Outcomes

The only drawback to the flexible approach of *Science Is Happening Here* is that it makes the formulation of intended learning outcomes a tricky business. The Ministry, perhaps aware of this fact, avoids the issue altogether. It doesn't give any explicit list of what students who have gone through this science program will be able to do.

As we have already seen in the example of the Manitoba elementary science curriculum, there is a danger in creating a list of intended learner outcomes that is too long or which promotes undesirable uniformity. If choice and flexibility are to be maintained, allowances have to be made for students who spend more time and gain more scientific skill and knowledge from some activities than they do from others. The question remains, How is it possible to adequately assess the effectiveness of a science program as flexible as the kind mandated by *Science Is Happening Here*? How do we find out if scientific knowledge is really "happening" for the students involved?

In *Science Is Happening Here*, activities are grouped according to their relation to life science, earth and space science, or physical science. It is stated that a teacher needs to allow for a balance of activities from each of these groups over the course of a school year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1988, p. 13). Keeping in mind the variations to be expected in classes' choices of activities, I feel that an important intended learning outcome consistent with the document is that students can demonstrate, by the end of Grade 6, an adequate grasp of at least one concept area in each of the science groupings: energy, space, time, matter, community, life, change, growth, interrelationships, technology, and conservation (1988, p. 19).

A second important learning outcome which is consistent with *Science Is Happening Here* is that a student can demonstrate, by the end of Grade 6, an effective use of the science skills that have been developed and practised throughout the three previous years in the activities.

However, we can only assess this "effective use" if we can determine precisely, through student behaviours, whether or not, and to what degree, the particular science skills mentioned are being employed. What can we see, for example, in a child's response to a demonstration which shows us that the child is classifying? And even if we can detect classifying behaviours, which ones suggest a broad or narrow command of that skill?

Alberta Education has published a series of "checklists of science process skills" for elementary schools which, I believe, can be useful for this kind of assessment.

For example, the checklist for classification skills requires that the child:

1. classifies objects according to attributes or properties (colour, shape, texture, etc.);
2. classifies objects first on one property, then on two properties and so on;
3. classifies objects, situations, or events according to given or self-imposed conditions;
4. identifies the condition or basis of a given classification set;
5. constructs classification schemes or keys diagrammatically or in some other communicable form;
6. identifies, through deductive thinking, an unidentified object in a classification scheme given various classification conditions; and
7. applies some form of self-devised classification scheme on any given set of objects, situations, or events.

The high end of each skill list states behaviours which are intended outcomes for students completing a Grade 6 science program in Alberta.

With the assessment of science skills clarified by the Alberta Education document, I have sketched out a set of measures for Ontario's programs which emphasize the following:

- testing done at the beginning of Grade 4 and at the end of Grade 6
- holistic scoring (1 to 5) for each task
- tasks are arranged in order of increasing difficulty
- all demonstrations during a test relate to one of: Life Science, Earth and Space Science, or Physical Science; a separate test is given for each of the other two groupings.

I have also sketched out a range of tasks which I believe demonstrate a student's adequate grasp of scientific concepts. This is depicted in the table on this page.

The tasks at the end of the list (see table) will generally involve a greater command of scientific skills and knowledge than those at the beginning. Item #1 will demand astute observation and classification on the part of the student and it will require him or her to have some familiarity with the concept area in question (e.g., the effect of moving the fulcrum on a teeter-totter). Item #7 will also require strong observation and classification skills. However, in addition, the student will have to exhibit complex inference skills and scientific concepts will have to be understood well enough from prior experience that they can be distinguished from each other in a potentially confusing, "mixed" situation (e.g., when predicting the influences of an external heat source and humidity on the properties of a solid block of wood, a hollow aluminum rod and a plastic spoon).

An interview procedure of this kind can capture the processes and content of scientific knowledge at work together in the student. It can determine whether or not science "has been happening" in the classroom activities that have followed from the documents. Because *Science Is Happening Here* is a valuable contribution towards eliminating the content/process dualism that has plagued science curriculum, it is hoped that some such verification of its benefits can be made in the near future

Demonstration of Adequate Grasp

1. follow a simple, two or three-step demonstration (non-verbal, using manipulative materials or a visual/video representation thereof) which focusses on one science concept and, in his or her own words, describe what has occurred in the procedure
2. describe, in his or her own words from personal experience, an event which involves, or directly relates to the concept that was demonstrated in #1
3. describe in his or her own words a demonstration similar to #1, but which involves measurement as a necessary step in the description
4. describe in his or her own words a simple demonstration similar to #1, but which focusses on two science concepts
5. describe in his or her own words from personal experience an event or events which directly involve(s) or relate(s) to both of the key concepts demonstrated, taken separately or together
6. given the first step in a demonstration similar to #1, predict accurately what will occur in the succeeding step(s)
7. given the first step in a demonstration similar to #4, predict accurately what will happen in the succeeding step(s)

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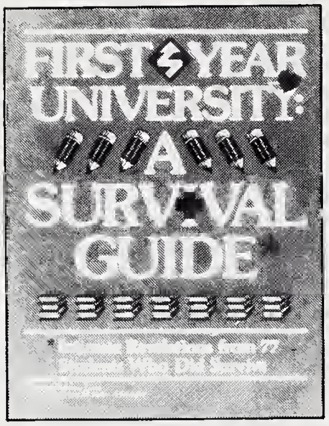
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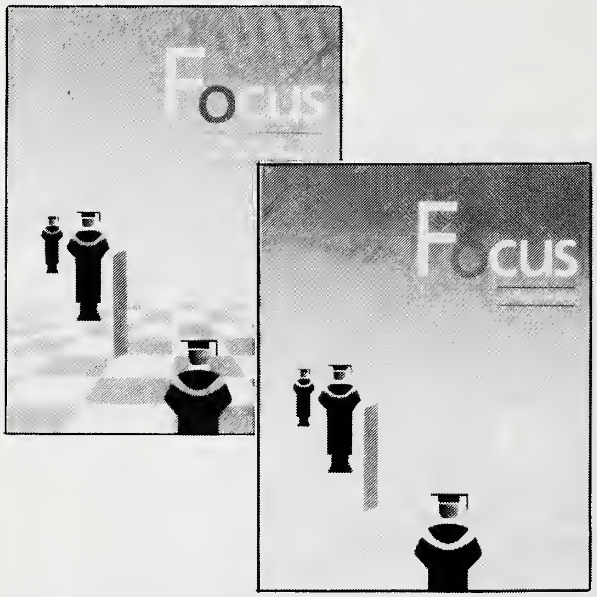

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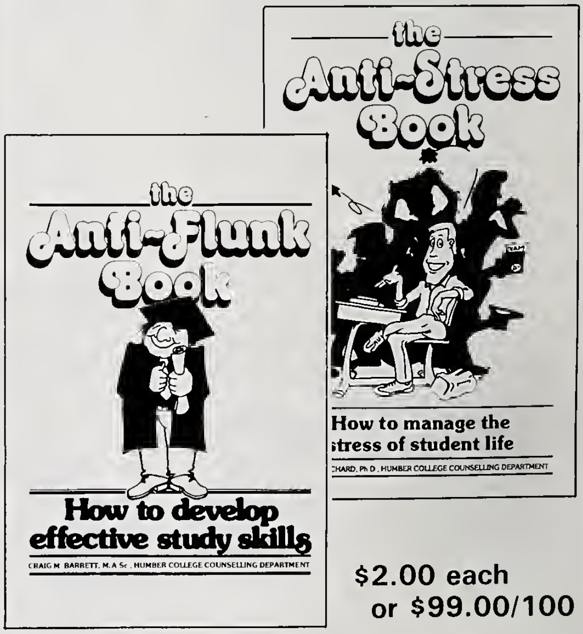
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